

BANDWAGON

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The Journal of the Circus Historical Society, Inc.

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Fred D. Pfening III ————— **Editor and Publisher**

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Maureen Brunsdale, Fred Dahlinger, Ralph Pierce and Peter Shrake were all helpful in bringing this issue to press. Also, John and Mardi Wells's excellent graphics and layout have enlivened this issue.

The Cover

In January 1950 Arthur Wirtz (1901-1983) bought the Cole Bros. Circus at a bargain-basement price. One of America's

greatest sports and live entertainment moguls, Wirtz is an overlooked figure in circus history. In the 1930s and 1940s he produced circuses at the Chicago Stadium and the Detroit Olympia, both of which were owned by him and James Norris (1879-1952), his business associate and bank roll. The acts for these dates were booked through the Barnes-Carruthers talent agency of which Wirtz was part owner. Additionally he had, at one time or another, a piece of the Chicago Blackhawks, the Detroit Red Wings and the Chicago Bulls. He helped make Sonja Heine a household name, and was a pioneer ice show promoter.

In framing the Cole show for 1950, Wirtz emulated Jerry Mugivan's strategy from 1929: Hire the top media cowboy, focus the advertising on him, and back him up with a first class performance. Mugivan had Tom Mix. Wirtz engaged William Boyd, better known as Hopalong Cassidy.

Boyd (1895-1972) grew up in crushing poverty in rural Ohio. He first appeared in films in 1918, securing his initial leading role in 1926. In 1935 he began playing Hopalong Cassidy, the character that made him famous.

It was a turning point in Boyd's career and life. Married five times, he was something of a rake in his youth. After he began playing the clean-cut Cassidy, he changed his personal habits to match those of his movie persona. In all, he made sixty-six Hopalong Cassidy movies, the last in 1948.

Boyd was a brilliant businessman. In 1948 he spent his life savings to buy all the Hopalong Cassidy films and the rights to the name. Seeing television as the entertainment medium of the future, he persuaded a Los Angeles television station to air his old movies, now edited down to an hour each. He, of course, hosted the program. One of the first syndicated television broadcasts, the Cassidy show was soon in sixty markets, and by 1949 he was television's first cowboy star.

His financial masterstroke was licensing Cassidy-themed merchandise and endorsing other products. It was far more lucrative than his burgeoning television show. Among the 2400 products bearing the Cassidy brand or imprimatur were candy bars, hats, butter, cereal, guns, pants, bread, spurs, records, soap, watches, knives, and even bicycles. He had his own comic strip and comic book, and a ghost-written advice column. The genial, grandfatherly Boyd connected with children on a visceral level.

Kids were wild about him, and in 1950 he was everywhere, even the cover of *Life* magazine.

Boyd was a wealthy man at the height of his career when Wirtz enticed him to join Cole Bros. by giving him one-third ownership in the circus. In retrospect, joining a circus seems an odd choice for Boyd, considering his myriad other opportunities, but he enjoyed meeting his fans face to face, and he had reason to believe it would be a highly lucrative engagement. After all, Tom Mix made \$10,000 a week on Sells-Floto in 1929.

The season opened April 21 with seventeen days at Chicago Stadium followed by twelve days at the Detroit Olympia. The performance included Terrell Jacobs with his lions and tigers, the Wallendas on the high wire, Con Colleano on the tight wire, the George Hanneford riding family, Rietta Wallenda on the sway pole, and Dorita Konyot's high school horse. Milt and John Herriott and John Smith all worked pony drills. Clown alley included Bobo Barnett, Earl Shipley, Happy Kellams, Horace Laird, Kenny Waite, Gene Lewis, and Abe Goldstein. Vander Barquette directed the aerial ballet.

In Boyd's only appearance in the show he came out riding his horse Topper to share familiar homilies with children about staying on the straight and narrow and obeying their parents. He thanked everyone for inviting him into their homes, and talked a little about his career and Hollywood friends. It wasn't much, but the children in the audience, many of whom came in Cassidy garb, went crazy, shouting themselves hoarse.

In spite of the first class performance, business was below expectations and reviews were tepid. Tom Parkinson wrote in *Billboard* that the show "packed little of the variety and virtually none of the color and lavishness of the Ringling Show. . . . It seemed more like a series of fair acts than a unified circus production." Brisk sales of Cassidy-themed concessions were one of the few bright spots.

After Detroit came the first stadium date in Columbus, then the last arena stand in Cincinnati. A string of stadium dates took the show east: Cleveland, Akron, Erie, Buffalo and Pittsburgh. Highly anticipated engagements in venerable Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, and Ebbetts Field in Brooklyn were disappointments in late June and early July. After July 5, all the dates were under canvas, generally one dayers in smaller

cities than earlier in the tour. Wirtz pulled the plug on August 5 in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania.

The season was a disaster, in part because the show wasn't adequately billed. The advance was mainly Chicago Stadium staff who had no experience publicizing a touring circus. Advertising materials such as press books were lacking. The billposting was a mess as a result of a labor dispute and the lack of and an experienced department head. Generally the posters consisted of twenty-four sheet billboards with no window work.

Wirtz thought Cassidy would be such an attraction that minimal advertising would be needed. In fact, he booked the troupe into huge venues such as Municipal Stadium in Cleveland and Yankee Stadium because he believed the show would draw more than its big top could hold. The circus also adopted the dubious strategy of following Ringling-Barnum into a number of big Eastern cities, apparently unaware of the conventional wisdom that the first show in a locale does the better business. It also stayed too long with some places; Pittsburgh was not a four day town, nor Columbus a three day one.

Wirtz and Norris had big plans for Cole Bros. They had hoped that after a wildly successful 1950 tour they would displace Ringling-Barnum in Madison Square Garden in 1951, especially since both men were large stockholders in the Garden. It wasn't to be. They decided the traveling circus business wasn't for them.

Boyd continued in television and in 1951 became involved in a theme park called Hoppyland in Anaheim, California. His last big screen role was as Hopalong Cassidy in his old friend Cecil B. DeMille's *Greatest Show on Earth* in 1952. His last public appearance was in 1961.

The mighty Cole Bros. Circus went out with a whimper, playing a lone stand in Chicago each spring from 1951 to 1953. The last year, television cowboy Duncan Renaldo, the Cisco Kid, was the main attraction. In 1959 Wirtz sold the Cole name to Frank McClosky and Walter Kernan to augment the title of their Clyde Beatty Circus.

The 1950 program on the cover has articles by Boyd, Sonja Heine, Milton Berle, and Tommy Bartlett, then a major radio personality and later the inventor of the modern Wisconsin Dells. It also includes numerous advertisements for Hopalong Cassidy products. Original in Pfening Archives. Fred D. Pfening III



Archie Chan, 1936-2012. Courtesy Circus Report and Jan Biggerstaff.

Archie Chan, Jr. Drummer ~~e~~xtraordinaire, Up front, out back

by Lane Talburt

Archie Chan, Jr. died on November 20, 2012. This story was written in 2008 based on an interview with him conducted during the 2007 Circus Historical Society convention in Las Vegas.

Gripping long, slender sticks as best he could in his small hands, five-year-old Archie Chan, Jr. sat at his new toy drum set in Savannah, Georgia, blew the whistle around his neck, placed the Victorola needle on a 78 RPM record and, to no one in particular, proudly announced: "John Ringling North presents Merle Evans and his Circus Concert Band."

For hours each day, Archie honed his drumming technique to the accompaniment of the world's greatest circus band. It paid off—twenty-six years later.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey was closing the 1968 season in Macon, Georgia, only 180 miles away, and Archie wanted to take in the Saturday shows. Accompanied by his father, Archie parked his car in the backyard in Macon and almost immediately ran into Jack Joyce, Ringling's assistant performance director.

"You're Archie Chan?" Joyce queried the new arrival. "I see you're going to be the drummer next season on the new Blue show."

"How did you know that?" the chagrined visitor said. "Nobody's supposed to know that."

"News travels fast," Joyce replied. "Everybody knows it. Go see Merle. He might need you."

Sure enough, Evan's regular drummer, Walter Bowen, had a stomach virus and was unable to play. "Walter was an elderly man who had played the trombone with the Cities Service Band of America," Chan recalled. "Merle liked that military style with his circus band, because he played a lot of marches."

Bowen also was a left-handed drummer, so Chan had to switch the drum hurriedly to the opposite side of the bandstand to fit his own right-handed playing style. It was to be Archie's debut under the leadership of the legendary bandmaster.

"Merle had never heard me play. And he liked it," Chan remembered with obvious pride. "He liked it very much."

The Macon dates marked not only the first but also the last time that Chan would play under Evans' direction. He returned home to Savannah to his new wife and to await the call from Irvin Feld that would launch Chan on a seventeen-year career with the circus's new owners.

He retired in 1994 as Feld's national senior sales manager, having switched from band drummer to concessions drummer. The change was prompted by backyard politics, Chan says, but the result was a more prosperous lifestyle, albeit behind the scenes.

In October 2007, Chan drove a few miles from his home in Las Vegas to cast a spell over attendees at the

Circus Historical Society convention, where he was the banquet speaker. Earlier in the day, he shared some of his circus experiences with the author.

Dad Takes Baby Archie to the Circus

With a father who took him to circuses throughout his childhood and a musically-inclined uncle who assembled a rustic drum set, it was almost inevitable that Archie would become a circus drummer.

Born July 23, 1936 to Archie C. Chan, Sr. (of Chinese descent) and Eunice Chan (her parents were of Jewish and German origin), the tanbark veteran was too young to remember the first circus his parents took him to see in Savannah that same year. It was Ringling Bros. with Merle Evans blowing his cornet and leading the band.

Although Archie's mother was not a circus fan, his father was. His parents wrapped him in blankets and took their first-born infant to the tented show.



William "Boom Boom" Browning, shown here on right with Beatty-Cole Circus band in 1960, hooked Chan up with King Bros. in 1964. Pfening Archives.

"My father always sat by the band. As loud as it was—and my mom said, 'It was loud,'—I seemed to have enjoyed every minute of it. I felt that instilled within me—a love of the circus."

Fortunately, the Chans' neighbors tolerated the loud, incessant sounds that emanated from Archie's drums as the boy grew.

The Chan family lived not far from the fairgrounds. "Circus day was always a day out of school for me," he recalls. The senior Chan also took time away from his laundry (leaving his wife behind to oversee the business) to engage in his only hobby.

Eventually, Archie began riding his own bicycle to observe the 24-hour man staking out the lot the day before a show's arrival. He got to know various circus people. When he was 12, Archie was on hand to watch the setup of the King Bros. Circus. It was a day that would determine the course of his future professional career.

"Floyd King was there, and Arnold Maley. They had a big show, with big yellow trucks with red lettering. And they had a big band—eight or ten members, led by Lee Hinckley, and featuring Al Leota on the drums and Harry Shell on trumpet."

Full of self-confidence, the youngster walked up to Hinckley and introduced himself. "My name is Archie Chan, and I'm a drummer. I'm a circus drummer."

To his surprise, he was invited to sit on the bandwagon for a circus parade through downtown Savannah.

And I said, "Oh, my gosh. OK. I'm ready."

Chan's Bandwagon Debut

Chaining his bike to the circus sleeper, the enthusiastic boy boarded the band bus for the trip downtown, where the group climbed on top of the truck-driven bandwagon.

"It might have been the only time that they let a townie do it, but I felt blessed and privileged that I was chosen to ride with them."

"We had gone about two blocks when the drummer turned to me and said, 'Hey, kid. You want to play some?' And he pointed to Lee Hinckley, who chewed a cigar and never played much. The band leader said, 'Yeah, let him play.'"

Chan positioned himself behind the drums and joined the group, which played "not even a full chorus of anything. Just enough to get sixteen measures or so out of that region, and then they stopped."

During the respites, Archie watched band members tilting popcorn boxes to their mouths. They didn't offer to share with the neophyte, even though Archie was hungry.

"I thought, 'These guys eat a lot of popcorn.' I looked closely, and what they had done, they had put a large beer in each popcorn box. And that was enough to last them for the one-hour parade through downtown."

The bandsmen obviously were fortifying themselves for two lengthy performances and the overnight jump to the next lot.

One of the troupe invited him to sit on the bandstand for the matinee. During the come-in, they allowed him to play. "The come-in was quite lengthy where they had clowns walking around. And sometimes it was more of a show than you would see today in an entire performance."

"During the come-in, the band wouldn't play very much, because they were going to kick in during the show—lots of gallops, and a lot of brass."

As he recalled, the band "loved" Archie's playing style. "That was when I knew, deep inside, that I wanted to be with the circus."

In the next few years, he gained experience playing with local groups, including the pit band at a burlesque house when he was only fifteen.



King Bros. office and ticket wagon on the lot at Sandy Springs, Georgia, April 10, 1965, the opening stand of the tour. Joe Bradbury photograph, Pfening Archives.

Several years later, Archie drove his father's car to the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. lot, where he sought to meet the show's drummer.

A workman said, "He hasn't come in yet. He drives a truck, and he'll be here in a little bit."

Moments later, the roustabout yelled, "Hey, Arch. He's here."

"I said, 'What's his name?' And he said, 'Boom Boom Browning.'"

"I looked, and there's this big fat man with a cigar hanging out of his mouth. He was getting out of his truck, and he was tired. He didn't want to talk to some young townie."

"I just stuck out my hand and said, 'I'm Archie Chan. I'm a circus drummer.' It warmed him up, and we became friends from that moment."

Browning didn't allow the punk kid to play in the band, but he did permit Archie to buy him dinner—a steak, no less—at a nearby restaurant between shows.

Breaking in on King Bros.

After graduating from high school and completing two years of college, Chan renewed his acquaintance with Browning, who asked



King Bros. canvas truck on lot early in the 1965 season. Pfening Archives.

the youth, "You wanna go out on a show?"

Browning explained that Acme Circus Corp., which owned the Beatty-Cole show, also fielded two other circuses, King Bros. and Sells & Gray—one of which might need a drummer.

In the fall of 1964, the young drummer received a telegram, which read: "Dear Archie Chan. King Bros. in need of drummer. If you can join, please reply."

"And the reply was to go to Harry Shell, the band leader. So I thought about it: A circus. A real circus. I asked my dad about it, and he said, 'Man, take it. That's what you've always wanted to do. You'll be happy.'"

Negotiating with Shell by phone, Chan was assured he would make "good money" on the show. Pressing for details, he was told, "We'll pay you \$75 a week. You'll get the cookhouse, and the cookhouse is worth a lot of money. You get three good meals a day. And you'll get the sleeper. You'll have all the accommodations you'll need."

At twenty-eight, Archie became a first-of-May for the last two-and-a-half weeks of the 1964 King Bros. tour. Taking a bus and taxi to the initial lot outside a North Carolina-border town, he had his idyllic dreams about circus life shattered by reality.

Not a green fairground but a muddy field greeted Archie when he unloaded his drums and one suitcase under rainy skies. "A working guy came by—I guess he'd been to the donniker some place down the road—and he said, 'Are you the drummer? We can't leave your drums by the side of the road.' And he helped me carry the drums down into that lot, which had turned into red clay mud. I mean red, deep, Carolina clay."

When he asked to meet the bandleader, Harry Shell, Archie was told Shell and the third band member were staying at a nearby motel and that they would not show up on the lot until just before the matinee performance.

"Where am I going to sleep?" he inquired.

Rosie Adopts 'Cuz Arch'

The workman replied, "In that white bus over there. We have an old school bus that was converted to a sleeper. But you've got to go to Rosie and Kenny McDonald, and they'll assign you a bunk in the bus."

Rosie, who ran concessions with her husband, turned out to be of Chinese descent, which was to the new drummer's benefit. She not only assigned "Cuz" Arch to a bunk at the front of the bus—where the open front door and windows would relieve some of the stench

of the working men. Rosie also purchased a new mattress for his bunk.

Arch's bunkmate on the opposite side of the aisle was Charlie Roark, who ran the sideshow.

"It was still pouring rain that first day. I asked, 'Where's the boss?' And they said, 'He's still sleeping; he'll be down in a little bit.'"

"I kept watching this Airstream trailer over there. In a little while it opened, and out came Bob Snowden, who was managing King Bros. He was part of the [Acme Circus] corporation. He had put up some money for his job."

Snowden looked up and down at his new drummer and assured him that "it doesn't rain like this every day on the circus."

But it did for the final two-and-a-half weeks of the 1964 tour.

Chan got to know Snowden fairly well, since he drove the show boss's pickup truck and trailer while the manager slept. "Bob had brought the show all the way [to the East Coast] from California, and he was burned out and tired."

When King Bros. played its last date in Savannah, Snowden offered Chan an opportunity to return the following season, which would provide about 28 weeks of drumming with the band. "For the same money?" Archie asked.

"And Bob says, 'Well, I'll tell you what. We'll give you \$80 a week. But here's the kicker: If you have a car, we'll pay the gas. And we'll give you the pony ride on the midway; you get a percentage of it.'"

The ride consisted of six ponies, with two more in reserve, operated by a working man, who in turn received a tip from Chan.

The offer was good enough to lure Archie back for King Bros.' 1965 season, which opened in Sandy Springs, Georgia.

Maley's Advice: "Take a Bit Off the Top"

"It was a good little show," Chan recalled. Lucy Snowden, Bob's new wife, worked the elephants and performed on a low tight wire. "We had Pedro and Joyce Canestrelli and their children, and Pedro's brother, Orestes. We had Mickey King doing one-arm planges. Roger Boyd was the announcer; his wife, Garnett, and their son, little Roger, ran a pit show where they charged 50¢ to see a gorilla that was actually an old overgrown chimpanzee."

Being raised as the son of an ethical small businessman, however, quickly brought young Chan into conflict with the circus's own accounting system. As a concessionaire, Archie went to the office wagon each day where Arnold Maley handed out a series of sequentially numbered tickets. At the end of the day, he would



Arnold Maley told Chan to skim a little from the King Bros. Circus pony ride in the mid-1960s. Charles DeWein photo, Pfening Archives.

turn in the receipts from the pony ride along with any remaining coupons and receive his cut of the take.

Not long into the season, Maley took Chan aside and mildly chided him. "Arch, my boy, you're turning in too much money."

"I said, 'What? I'm giving you an accurate count.'"

"Arnold said, 'Yeah, but the girl who ran the ride last year didn't. You're turning in more money.'"

Maley posed a solution: Archie should "take a little bit off the top so you can eat a good meal every day. Give us enough to feed the horses and take care of them. That's all."

"So I did," Chan admitted. "I felt real guilty about it, but it wasn't very much. In those days you could get a good meal for two or three dollars."

Quickly learning new ways to earn an extra buck, Archie became a convenience store operator out of the back of his car, selling items such as beer and chewing tobacco to working men who could not have their own transportation and could not leave the lot.

"I was a merchant. I'd sell this and that, and I had the pony ride, and I played in the band. So I was making money. And it's true—at least it was in those days—that you had more opportunities to make money on a small show than on a bigger show."

Winter Show Bandsman

Even though 1965 would be Snowden's last season on King Bros., he offered Chan a job on a magic show that played school auditoriums in small Southern towns the following year. He would play in the band with Harry Shell and Harry's wife, Isla. Charlie Roark and Lucy Snowden would do magic. And a few ex-King Bros. candy butchers would sell concessions and dress up as on-stage characters for the show.

"And we had Stanley, who was the sword swallower on the sideshow. He came on as an escape artist. They put chains on him and we played. And sometimes he'd be right out of them. At other times, a big Marine or policeman from the audience would chain him. He couldn't get loose, so we'd have to play ten choruses."

Returning to Savannah after the magic show's short run, Chan received a call from bandleader Harry Shell who said his elderly, sickly wife had died. Chan consented to his request to go to Tampa, Florida and live with Shell while he went through a period of bereavement.

Tired of being sequestered in Shell's home, Chan persuaded his mentor to call Charlie Rice, a bandleader at the St. Petersburg dog

race track. Rice needed a drummer and Archie heeded the call, accompanied by Shell.

The job was fairly simple and not too demanding, he recalls. "We played one number while they walked out the dogs. And then we'd wait. When the dogs would run, we'd play a gallop. When they announced the winner, we'd play one more number. And then we'd wait while people placed their bets for the next race—about a half hour later."

Because his fellow band members at the dog track were mostly retired musicians who had played on major circuses, Chan gained invaluable performing experience, which he was to use when he

visited the Circus Hall of Fame show in Sarasota in 1967.

"I went up to the band, which consisted of Tex Maynard, who was a very good show drummer, he'd played with the Ziegfeld Follies, and his wife, Marci, who played the organ by ear. But she knew all the circus music."

Among the circus acts he witnessed were Jose Barreda and his lions and the Esqueda family with unicycles and aerial routines.

Clyde Bros. Offers First Big Break

"Tex turned to me and said, 'Hey, do you want to go out on the road?' I said, 'I've got a gig.' Tex said, 'No. Do you want to go out on the circus?' And history was repeating itself for me."

Chan was introduced

to bear trainer Wally Naughtin, who hired him to be the drummer on the larger of two units of Howard Suesz's Clyde Bros. Circus, based in Edmond, Oklahoma. Chan's salary would be \$150 a week, plus mileage for his car.

Reporting to his first engagement in St. Petersburg, Archie found himself paired with a young organist from Bluefield, West Virginia—David Eppley.

"It turned out that it was a pretty big show," he remembers. "Jose Barreda was on the show; Charlie Peterson had baby elephants; Trevor Bale was there with his girls; Elvin [Bale] didn't do his heel catches at the time; he was just with the family. Alberto Zoppé and his wife, Sandy, and their baby, Giovanni, were there, along with Cucculo [Alberto's midget cousin]. The Hartzell family had a comedy trapeze bar act. And then we had Lacy's Rolling Globes."

The show jumped from Florida to Atlanta and then into Canada for a series of Shrine dates. Depending on the size of the city, the musicians union supplemented the size of the band.

In Winnipeg, Manitoba, the band swelled to 25 members. "And



L. to r., Buster Bailey, drummer for the New York Philharmonic Orchestra; Merle Evans, Ringling-Barnum bandleader; and W. Ray "Red" Floyd, long-time drummer in Evans's band, 1970. In late 1968 Evans offered Chan a job as drummer on the new 1969 Blue Unit. Buster Bailey photo. Pfening Archives.

I went looking for Wally Naughtin, who was managing the show. And I says, 'Wally, where's the band leader?' Wally says, 'Oh, I forgot to tell you. Howard [Suesz] says you're going to be the bandleader. You've been leading it anyway; you might as well take it over.'

Chan was ecstatic. "So here I came from a three-piece band at King Bros., to a two-piece Clyde Bros. band and now all of a sudden, I've got 25 players. I was big-time, man."

When the unit closed its 1967 season in Toronto weeks later, Chan was told his work permit for Canada would no longer suffice. He would need to obtain a passport because the show was going to open a thirteen-week run in Mexico in early 1968.

His decision to go south of the border would lead him into a life-changing romantic adventure.

His first trip to Mexico City in 1968 brought Archie Chan, Jr. a lot more than he bargained for. Not only did he have to learn a few Spanish phrases to direct a non-English-speaking circus band, he also had to memorize the word "matrimonio" to propose marriage to the young Mexican woman who, unexpectedly, became the love of his life.

In that same year Archie actualized the dream he had nourished since boyhood—being "with it" as a drummer on the Greatest Show on Earth.

Always eager to tackle new challenges, he began the new year by chugging down pock-marked Mexican highways in his Oldsmobile, pulling a small trailer home. As Archie recalled almost 40 years later, his sole passenger was the impresario of a large stadium circus, also produced by Clyde Bros.

"I normally don't take riders," Chan told the elderly promoter when the fleet pulled out of McAllen, Texas, for the lengthy trek to Mexico City.

"With a car like that," responded the promoter, "I know you're going to go faster than the circus trucks, and when we get to Mexico City, we'll have a police escort waiting for us."

As the pair stopped along the way to gas up and eat, they attracted the attention of customers and cooks. Chan later learned that the promoter had been telling onlookers that the drummer was a famous circus personality on El Circo del Mundo, "the largest circus in the world."

To be certain, many of the acts on the show had been on Ringling. Wally Naughtin, the unit manager, had his bears. Simone appeared

with her chimps, along with many other animal and aerial acts. "There were 35 semi-trailers on that show," Chan remembered. "It was a big, big show."

Intro to Spanish 101

When it came time for the show band's rehearsal—immediately before the opening matinee performance in a Mexico City ball park—Chan made two discoveries: first, that he would be directing some of the greatest Latin musicians, including three members of the famed Perez Prado band, in his large ensemble, and second, that none of them—except for the organist he brought with him—understood English. And Archie spoke no Spanish.

Panicked, he called on the translation services of two German

jugglers who were fluent in Spanish.

Archie quickly learned four cues which he would need to lead the band: "Listo," or ready. "Corte," or cut. "Repeate," or repeat, and "Accorde," or chord.

As the rehearsal began, the band was sitting "in the bandstand high up in the air" in the stadium. With his left hand, Chan signaled the opening downbeat and with his right he began to play his drums out front.

"And that's how I ran it," he laughs. "Get them started,

tell them when to stop, when to play a chord, and when to repeat. I was on my way; boy, I had them under control."

During the five-week ballpark run, Archie had a chauffeur, Julio, who had lived in California, to escort the visiting band leader to local tourist sites.

One day, Julio told his boss, "Archie, we going to shopping mall. Have pretty girls there."

"And right away, I see this pretty little girl—Ana Elleno." Through his interpreter, Chan asked the eighteen-year-old maiden for a date. Within a matter of weeks, he was thumbing through his newly-acquired *Webster's Diccionario* to find the Spanish word for "matrimony." Ana accepted his proposal, but it took another four weeks to work through the bureaucracy to get their marriage license. The wedding date was Valentine's Day, February 14, 1968. In 2008 the couple observed their 40th wedding anniversary at their home in Las Vegas.

A Mexican Wedding

Ana's father, an aunt and uncle were witnesses at the ceremony



Ringling-Barnum band in Madison Square Garden, 1972. Archie Chan is up front on the drums while band director Bill Pruyn is standing to his right. Buster Bailey photo in May 1973 Southern Sawdust.

in a judge's office in Mexico City. The bride's mother was unable to attend, as she was giving birth to her 11th child, Chan explained.

Archie's younger brother, Tai, who lived in California, was on hand to be the groom's witness. But he needed another, so he recruited a Mexican pig farmer off the street, paying him 200 pesos—equivalent to about \$16 in American currency in those days.

"My brother looked up at him and said, 'Archie, get him out of here. Who is he?'"

"I said, 'Tai, shut up. He's your other brother.'"

"So this pig farmer stood there and just smiled, and he signed the license. The judge was very nice, and the whole ceremony was in Spanish.

"When it was over, I turned to Tai and said, 'Let's get out of here; I'm hungry.'"

Overhearing their whispered conversation, the judge interrupted. "You speak English," he said. "Why you don't tell me? I lived in New York City for fifteen years."

Chan told the judge he didn't understand a word of the ceremony, but was reassured that "you're married anyway. Good luck and God bless you."

From the Mexican dates, the newlyweds jumped to St. Petersburg where the Clyde Bros. troupe opened its winter Shrine engagements. It was his second season to lead the circus band.

As the circus jumped northward into Canada, Archie and his by-now expecting wife took advantage of days off (Shrine dates usually opened Thursday or Friday and closed on Sunday) to visit Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey when that show was close by. During those visits, Chan got to know Merle Evans, the legendary bandleader on Big Bertha. He remembers seeing tiger trainer Charly Baumann and elephant trainers Hugo Schmitt and Axel Gautier. And in his small voice, Evans would tease Chan by asking, "Arch, how many elephants you got on that [Clyde Bros.] show?"

"I'd say, three babies," Archie recalls.

"Oh, we've got 25 on this show," Evans would retort.

When Howard Suesz's circus reached Buffalo, New York, in March, Chan found a letter from Evans awaiting him. Chan was invited to Madison Square Garden to talk with the bandmaster.

Invitation to Join the Big One

It was Archie's first time in the huge Manhattan arena, which had only recently opened at its new location above Penn Station. With his wife beside him, Chan took the Madison Square Garden elevator

to the fifth floor, where he stepped off to a maze of show animals, spec floats and props. Evans greeted the couple and told Archie, "Hang around. I want to visit with you between shows."

Over lunch, the two musicians talked, pausing at one point to poke fun at Ana's voracious appetite. "She was pregnant with my first son," Chan laughed. "She ordered a steak, and when it was gone, she ordered another one. And Merle looked at Ana and said, 'Arch, you're going to have to beat a lot of drums to take care of that girl.'"

Evans informed Chan that Irvin Feld, the new owner (with brother Israel Feld and Roy Hofheinz), was planning to form a new show—the Blue Unit—in 1969. "Would you like to be the drummer?" Evans inquired.

"Oh my gosh, Merle, you know I would," Archie gushed enthusiastically. "I've always had a dream to be with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, and I've always known I would be there."

After completing his second-season commitments to Clyde Bros., Chan returned to his home in Savannah. He had the opportunity to play for Merle Evans when Ringling Bros. closed out its 1968 season in Macon, Georgia.

Shortly afterward, Archie received the call he had been awaiting for more than six months.

"Archie Chan?" Irvin Feld asked. "I understand you're going to be my new drummer. Merle says you can play, and that's all I need."

"Bill Pruyn and Lee Pruyn are going to be the bandleader and organist and you're going to play with them. So get some rest and get ready to go," Feld concluded.

But Chan wasn't finished with the conversation. "Mr. Feld, what about my wife? Somebody has said you use a lot of girls on the show for the web or to work in the productions. And the extra money would certainly help us." (Ana Chan had already begun selling concessions on Clyde Bros.)

"You mean I've got to hire her to get you?" the owner retorted.

Not wanting to jeopardize his standing with the new bossman, Chan quickly retreated: "No sir, you don't have to hire her. I'll come anyway."

The Chans spent the winter vacationing with Ana's family in Mexico City, where they showed off their first child, Archie C. Chan III, born in November 1968. In March 1969, Archie pulled his small cramped trailer into the Venice, Florida arena parking lot to begin rehearsals for the inaugural season of the Blue show.



William Pruyn was the band leader on the Ringling-Barnum Blue unit during Chan's tenure as drummer. Here Pruyn discusses a musicological point with his wife Lee, organist in the band. Ringling-Barnum publicity photo, Pfening Archives.



Performance Director and tiger trainer Charly Baumann was one of the stars of the Blue unit when Chan was in the band. Ringling-Barnum publicity photo. Pfening Archives.

Championing His Family

At the gate to the backyard, however, a security guard informed him that, despite prior assurances, there was no room for the family trailer. Miffed but determined, Chan parked the trailer at a campground several miles away.

During the first rehearsal, Ringling senior vice president Allen Bloom sauntered over to Chan and inquired, "What's your problem?"

"I'm here all day long, and I have a wife and baby sitting in a campground," Archie responded. "I want to park my trailer inside here."

Bloom nodded, and within ten minutes he returned with General Manager Lloyd Morgan in tow, who had an answer, of sorts. "We're going to put you back there," Morgan told Chan. "But the only space we've got is by the animals."

The location, though near the arena backdoor, "was a little too close to the animals," Archie chuckled. "Twenty-five elephants drew a lot of flies. You get twenty horses, you get more. We got tigers and all those cage animals back there, and we got still more. The flies were all over us. The big cats made noise early in the morning and late at night, wanting to be fed. But we adjusted to it; my wife and baby went inside where it was air conditioned and where they had a cafeteria. She made herself at home. And because there were a lot of Mexicans on the show, they treated her nicely."

With Bill Pruyn out front, Chan introduced a jazzy style of drumming to the new circus band. He was still playing circus music, but throwing in more "tricks," which he learned from the likes of Tex Maynard and Red Floyd. "I had so many people coming

up to me, telling me how much they enjoyed my drumming," Chan remembers.

Following dress rehearsal at Venice, the Blue unit made its inaugural stand at St. Petersburg, where the circus performance was videotaped for an hour-long special program on network TV. "We didn't get any extra pay for it, but that's circus," Chan shrugged.

The inaugural Blue unit featured Charly Bauman and his tigers, Elvin Bale's single trapeze with his breath-taking heel catch, Duval the Great (Manfred Fritsch) on highwire, and Hugo Schmitt's elephants.

"Long, Long" Shows in Astrohalla

After winding through Louisiana, the new show pulled into Houston, Texas for a thirteen-week, Memorial Day-to-Labor Day stand in the Astrohalla, as arranged by Judge Roy Hoffheinz, a major investor, who served as the circus's board chairman. "Irvin Feld always used someone else's money," Chan noted.

"And the shows were long. Long. Two hours and fifty-five minutes each. Three shows on Saturdays and Sundays, and three times on holidays. Thirteen weeks with no days off. It killed us. We were burned out and tired," Chan recalled.

One of the Chans' neighbors in the nearby trailer park was Terry Peers, a veteran concessionaire whose son, Johnny Peers, left the show at the end of the season to enroll in the second class of Ringling's Clown College at Venice and who later returned to Ringling-Barnum with his center-ring act, Johnny Peers and His Muttville Comix.

After the fatigued Blue unit played other dates in the Midwest, it closed early to begin rehearsals for the 100th anniversary edition of Ringling Bros. in 1970.



When Chan's wife Ana moved into concessions on the Blue unit in the early 1970s, she had a run in with Willis Lawson, shown here inexplicably reading the 1953 Circus Fans Association roster, who was transitioning out of being head of the concessions operation. Pfening Archives.

Featured acts included two rings of the Gaona family flying return trapeze, high-wire artists Joe Seitz and Gene Mendez, and Charly Baumann's captivating tiger routine.

Opening once again in St. Petersburg, the circus wended its way to New York City, where Archie made his Madison Square Garden debut. In the meantime, Ana Chan had worked her way into concessions during a transitional period when the Feld organization took over concessions from Willis Lawson and his crew of independent candy butchers.

Conflict with Willis Lawson

"It was very political," Chan pointed out. "Willis had his own people, and they just didn't give Ana much to sell. They gave her a little table in the corner."

Feld's Vice President of Finance, Charles F. (Chuck) Smith, noticed Ana's predicament and asked her husband, "Arch, how come she doesn't have much merchandise?"

"Because they gave it to Willis Lawson's people," Chan responded.

"To hell with that," Smith snorted. "Willis's people are just hanging around. We own the concessions."

Smith ordered Roland Kaiser, the new concessions manager, to outfit Chan's wife with the newest flash, which Kaiser was reluctant to do because his own wife, Rose, had the Number 1 stand.

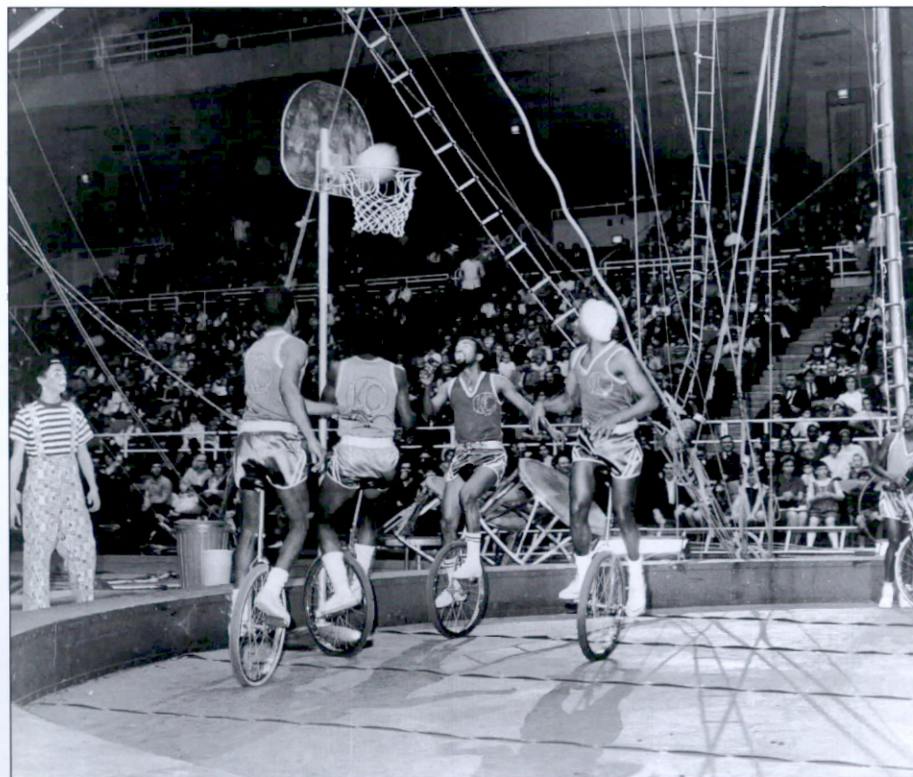
"So anyway, they gave us the merchandise that would sell and Ana began making some money. Chuck Smith would come stand by her because he was new and didn't know much about concessions."

The executive was learning from Mrs. Chan, who spoke little English and who was learning the business herself. "But Chuck respected us as people," Chan stated with pride.

And respect for an individual translated into favors and better



Michu started his American career on the Ringling-Barnum Red unit in 1973, and moved over to the Blue show in 1974, when he and Chan trouped together. Ringling-Barnum publicity photo, Pfening Archives.



Charles King, head of the King Charles unicycle troupe, drove Michu, who was known to take a drink or three, overland between dates and acted as his caretaker for a while, later pawning the job off on Chan. This photo of the King Charles performers in action dates from 1969. Ringling-Barnum publicity photo, Pfening Archives.

positioning within the circus family, as Archie had learned over the years. Standing up for himself and his family was important in his dealing with show management.

When Chan asked for additional space for his family on the circus train, for example, the trainmaster was told by Irving Feld to "give it to him." The Chans continued to travel by car and trailer but used the train compartment to store their bicycles and to house visiting family members.

At Madison Square Garden, Chan was about to park his trailer outside when a circus workman pointed out he was entitled to a space inside. "That's part of your contract, and Irvin Feld says to honor it," the transportation man said.

Using a tractor, a worker gingerly pulled the trailer up a winding ramp to the fifth floor, where the Chans once again shared space with circus animals.

Tracking "World's Smallest Man"

One of Chan's favorite characters during his tenure on the Blue unit was a thirty-three-inch tall, twenty-five-pound Hungarian midget, Mihaly Meszaros, better known as Michu. He had been personally signed by the bombastic circus owner and made his Blue unit debut on the 104th edition in 1974. Chan recalled that Michu was just as

funny offstage as he was on. But when he was offstage, he drank, leading to more than a few incidents.

At a Ringling press party in Calgary, Alberta, for instance, Michu was nowhere to be seen. One of the midget's keepers said, "Oh my gosh, somebody's stole him. If he gets drunk, he might get lost."

A desperate search ended when the chaperones spotted movement under the skirt of a tall, obese female guest. "Michu was under her dress, holding onto her legs and dancing with her," Chan laughed.

"So we reached under there and pulled him out. He was smiling, and she was laughing."

At a later date in Memphis, Charles King, leader of the King Charles Troupe of basketball-playing unicyclists, asked Chan to take over the caretaking responsibility for the mischievous midget. "King Charles used to bring Michu overland because the train never got in on time, and they had to be sure he got in."

The cyclist begged Chan to keep Michu during the Memphis fairgrounds stand, because "he's wearing us out." The Chans brought the inebriated star into their trailer and placed him in a chair, where he passed out.

"My wife covered him up. She thought he was cute."

During the night, Archie's sleep was interrupted by the sounds of pounding on the trailer screen door. The noise was coming from a confused Michu, who was shouting in Hungarian.

"We went in, and he was looking at us," Chan remembered. "He was still in a daze. So we calmed him down, and my wife gave him a little coffee. Then we took Michu to the trailer and got rid of him."

"Michu was a funny little guy," Archie said in a nostalgic tone.

Chan continued drumming on the Blue unit through the 1974 season.

During that time, his younger brother, Tai, left Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus to become a drummer on the Red show. According to Archie, they were the only two brothers to play drums simultaneously in the history of Ringling Bros. bands.

Archie ran into circus politics at the end of the 1974 season, when a simmering dispute between him and another show employee who claimed to be a Feld relative left Chan on the outside of Big Bertha looking in.

"They didn't want me anymore, and I know that's why—because [the other employee] was very close to Irvin Feld."

Temporary Ringling Exile

When Chan returned to his off-season home in Venice, he received a phone call from veteran bandleader Keith Killinger, who had heard of Archie's firing.

"Do you want to go to Puerto Rico?" Killinger said. "I'm going with Jimmy Harrington and his Pan American Circus. You can bring Ana and the children with you." By then, the Chan family had

added a second son, Allen.

Chan drummed for a top-notch cast, which included Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with elephants and ponies, Eloise Berchtold with her big cats, and the Ramos family with teeterboard and other routines.

Back in Venice, Archie was summoned to a meeting at Killinger's house. Also gathered there, to Chan's amazement, were Merle Evans and Tex Maynard.

"Keith tells me, 'I know where you're going' [for his next job]. Keith picks up the phone and calls Holiday on Ice—it wasn't owned by the Felds yet."

Killinger told Benny Stabler, the ice show bandleader and former trumpet player for bands headed by Woody Herman and Stan

Kenton, "I've got Archie Chan over here," said Killinger, "and he's left the circus. You want him?"

Stabler responded enthusiastically and asked Chan to see him for an interview the following week in Nashville.

"Benny had never heard me play. I walk in with open arms. He said, 'Do you want this job?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'How long do you need to get to Hartford, Connecticut?' I said, 'I pull a big trailer, but I'm circus people. When do you want me there?'"

Drummer Walks New Beat

Six days later, the Chans pulled into Hartford, where semi-trailers carrying Holiday on Ice equipment were arriving for the setup. It was a new performing environment for Chan, but he adjusted quickly to setting the drum cues for music accompanying the skaters on ice. He also became a concessionaire.

Through another ex-Ringling concessionaire, Tommy Brice, Archie's wife found a job selling souvenirs. Archie joined her when he wasn't on the bandstand.

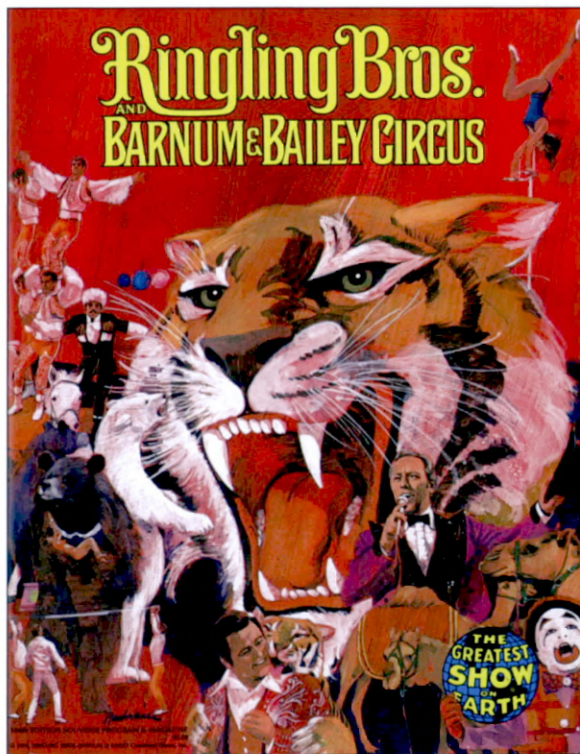
"Tommy never asked for a count on closing night," Chan said. "He trusted us. He just would say, 'How much you got?' And we'd say, 'Five thousand dollars.' And he'd say, 'OK. See you Tuesday' for the next date."

"With two people grabbing money, we made twice as much," Chan said.

The Chans followed the show to Mexico City, where Archie drummed for five weeks. There was no concessions opportunity there for them, so Ana spent the time visiting her relatives. After completing the 1975 season on various units of Holiday on Ice, Chan and his family returned to Savannah for some much-needed down time. Their respite was brief.

Big Bertha Brings Big Money

A phone call from Chuck Smith brought Archie and Ana back to Ringling Bros. in Richmond, Virginia. The circus was introducing a Mickey Mouse flashlight as a souvenir and the Chans would be working together to sell the new toy. For all practical purposes, Archie's career as a musical drummer was over, and he was



Cover of 1974 Ringling Blue unit program. The performance included Charly Baumann with tigers, Axel Gautier with elephants, Michu, the Flying Gaonas, and the King Charles unicycle troupe. Pfening Archives.

launching a second career as a merchandise drummer.

The small lights were selling at \$2 each, but sales were so brisk that Chan persuaded Smith to raise the price to \$2.50 and finally to \$3. It was such a hot item that the lights kept moving."

Chan found himself working once again for Roland Kaiser, but under more congenial circumstances. The brother of Kaiser's wife had married Ana Chan's sister.

The concessions unit also made room for Archie's brother Tai and his wife.

"And Ana and I had two young boys who could stand behind the stand wrapping cotton candy—they were very energetic." The Chans not only had the fluff concession, but also programs and two novelty stands.

The combined family was so successful that Sells-Floto, the concessions subsidiary of the Feld organization, brought them back season after season. "We were making a lot of money, but working hard, very hard," Chan recalls.

Toward the end of the 1981 season, Archie spotted Irvin Feld in the seats during the St. Louis stand. He attempted to approach the owner to seek another sales position, one that would be less stressful and tiring. Unfortunately, Feld left before Chan could reach him.

Later, in Cleveland, the senior Feld singled out Archie for a chat. "He said, 'Arch, how do you get along in Las Vegas?'"

"I said, 'I guess I get along well. I don't gamble. I don't drink. You know my history: I just work.'"

Feld sprang the news that he was bringing out a new show featuring illusionists Siegfried and Roy at the Frontier Hotel and Casino in Vegas.

"And I would like it you'll come and merchandise them. You'll be the concessions manager for Siegfried and Roy," Feld told Chan. "I don't know how much money we'll make, but I know the show will do well."

On the day when Chan arrived at the showplace, he was introduced to the magic-making duo by Feld, who said, "Siegfried, Roy, I brought you my number one concessions guy from my shows here to work with you. Please look out for him."

Allen Bloom, who had accompanied Feld, asked Archie to have his wife join him on the venture. "We're going to take good care of her," Bloom said.

From that moment on, "a lot of things were thrown our way because of what Irvin Feld had said. Siegfried and Roy looked out for me. Ana and I were invited to a lot of special events."

Chan clearly recalled the first show in 1981 where he donned a tuxedo. He "stood out like a maitre d'" at the showroom entrance, but his souvenirs made a less favorable impression on guests who were paying top dollar to see the outstanding act.

"Irvin Feld came by and asked, 'How's it going?' 'Oh,' I said, 'it's going alright. But I don't think we have what they want.' Feld said,

'Don't worry. We're going to get new stuff.'

"Meanwhile Siegfried and Roy were working their white tigers, and they had a little baby tiger back there. All of a sudden, a truck comes in, loaded with white-tiger plush. We put it up everywhere. We had a little stuffed tiger selling for \$59 and a large one for \$100. And they were selling like hotcakes."

Sales opportunities increased when the illusionists added a second evening show to meet ticket demands.

Archie and Ana remained with the Las Vegas show until the Frontier contract ran out at the end of 1987. Kenneth Feld, who had assumed leadership of the family enterprise after the death of his father in 1984, approached Chan with an offer to follow Siegfried and Roy on a tour to Japan.

Teaming up with Mickey Mouse

Chan declined, saying Japan was too far from home, "and I don't like sushi."

"I was very close to Kenneth." He assured Chan that another position was awaiting him. "Chuck Smith says that you're going out on the Disney show as a manager," Feld said. "It's clean, makes good money. You'll be doing fine."

For the next year, Chan ran concessions on the Mickey Mouse Jubilee tour on ice.

"I loved the Disney show," Archie said. "I was making fabulous commissions and percentages, you know. It was a piece of cake, but I was traveling every week."

Another phone call, this from Charlie Graco who directed Feld's ice-show operations, reunited Chan with Siegfried and Roy—this time, however, at Radio City Music



Front cover of program for Siegfried and Roy show at Radio City Music Hall in 1989. Chan was in charge of concessions for this date. Pfening Archives.

Hall in New York in 1989

Using stands from the Disney ice show with reworked signs and the facility's own vendors, Chan supervised concessions at the theater for several weeks. "The show was beautiful, and it clicked. We made some serious money."

When Siegfried and Roy returned to Las Vegas, they relocated to a new showroom at the Mirage. Chan had intended to make the move with them, but was told he would have to be "interviewed" for a possible job?

"What do you mean, see if they can use me?" Archie implored?

"Yeah," a Feld executive responded. "The concessions here are more like retail. It's a store, not like the concessions business. It's not like what you're used to doing."

"But," the executive assured Chan, "Kenneth Field has already spoken with [casino owner] Steve Wynn, and his people are going to talk with you and your wife, and make a spot for you."

As it turned out, Chan's asking price was more, much more, than the casino managers were willing to pay. They hired his wife as a shift manager in the Sells-Floto-managed store, which stayed open 24 hours a day.

Returning to Bandstand

Archie returned to familiar territory at Feld circuses and ice shows.

He particularly relished his time on the Red unit where Gunther Gebel-Williams brought unprecedented star power to the marquee—and to concessions sales. “His name and picture on the program just sold cases every show. I mean, it was big money.”

The musically-inclined concessionaire couldn’t resist the temptation to occasionally return to his roots. “Sometimes around the shows, the drummer would sleep in, and I’d run down [to the bandstand] and start the show and stay with them for a little while. It was like I had never left.”

Following a stint on “special projects,” the Sells-Floto people handed Archie a new and intriguing challenge. They wanted him to train a group of fifteen, mostly young men from Lebanon, to sell concessions on the Disney show. Chan also was tagged with this assignment: “Try to control them a little bit.

“They were so aggressive” was the impression that Chan gained from his first observation of the Arabic-speaking butchers. “They had dollar signs in their eyes. They would kill you for the twenty-five-cent commission off a snow cone. They were fighting each other in the stands.”

Archie’s “A Team”

“And I told them, ‘Whoa, whoa.’ And quickly got them under control. When they found out that I was going to help them, they started respecting me. They treated me like a father; in fact, they called me the Godfather. I made good vendors out of them. Figures went up rapidly because those Arab guys could sell!”

Noticing that other Feld units, especially the circuses, were having trouble getting vendors, Chan suggested to his management that he be utilized to train butchers for other shows. Chuck Smith quickly agreed, and further, went along with Chan’s idea to create a flying squadron out of his best concessionaires.

“Archie’s A Team” consisted of Chan’s new Winnebago motor home and two vans that had been gutted and refitted as sleepers for twelve crew members. During the 1998-1999 season the team rotated between the Red and Blue units, concentrating on major cities where arena sales opportunities would be greater. In addition to the Lebanese, the crew included resourceful butchers from other circuses, such as the Beatty-Cole show.

“We’d hit a big city,” he explained. “My people came in and got the figures up on that show. We’d finish that engagement and then we’d go to the next big engagement, never staying on the same show for any length of time.

“We worked a lot of cities, and we made a lot of money. Every time they sold something, I got a commission.”

Unfortunately, the successful experiment met an ignominious end. Archie told his team he was taking a week off to return home to Las Vegas. He also gave them the time off, ordering them to return their vans and his motor home to Sarasota. En route, the Winnebago malfunctioned and caught fire near Atlanta, Georgia. Even though the mobile home and trailers burned to the ground, none of the crew was injured.

Chuck Smith told Chan that Ringling flat-bed trucks had been dispatched to return the wreckage to winter quarters. “But you’re not going back out with a unit like that,” Smith said. “We’re afraid something’s going to happen.”

Chan returned to his special-projects work until receiving a phone call announcing a new promotion—to the position of senior sales manager for all Feld shows.

Archie was well-known to his new boss, Mike Gorman, who himself was newly promoted to sales vice president for Sells-Floto. “He really didn’t know much about concessions, but he learned. And he learned a lot from me.”

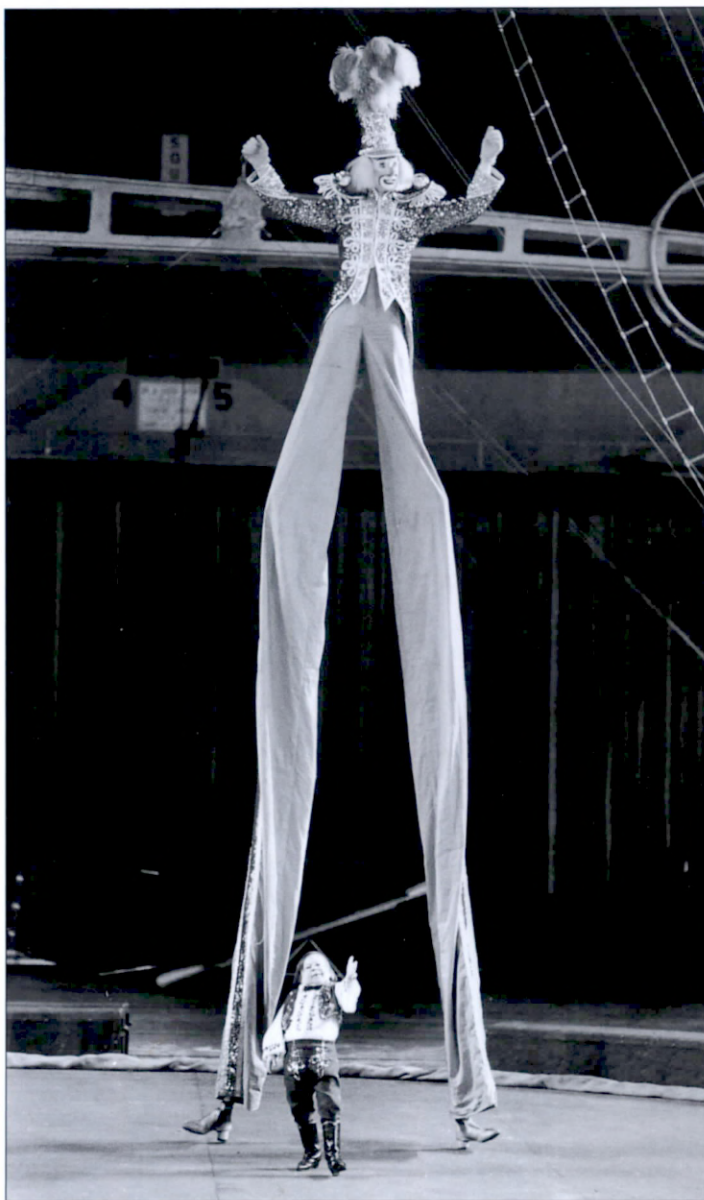
Chan’s new assignment was to travel from show to show, training new sales people. Gorman told him: “You’ll

be sure we have enough personnel, and you’ll work on sales. Sales, sales, sales.”

It was a task requiring many 18-20-hour days, many which Chan spent on the road in his mobile bus. He used his phone to hire vendors for the upcoming engagements for the various units. “I had an ad in many newspapers, and they were always calling me on the answering machine. I never quit working. I would come in all stressed out, all burnt up, all in bad shape.”

Conflict Leads to Retirement

The new management also had sharply trimmed Chan’s earnings potential. His boss told him, “Arch, you’re having fabulous bonuses.



Clever publicity photo of Michu with stiltwalker Steve LaPorte. Ringling-Barnum publicity photo, Pfening Archives.

Your bonuses are hitting six figures. You're not going to do that anymore."

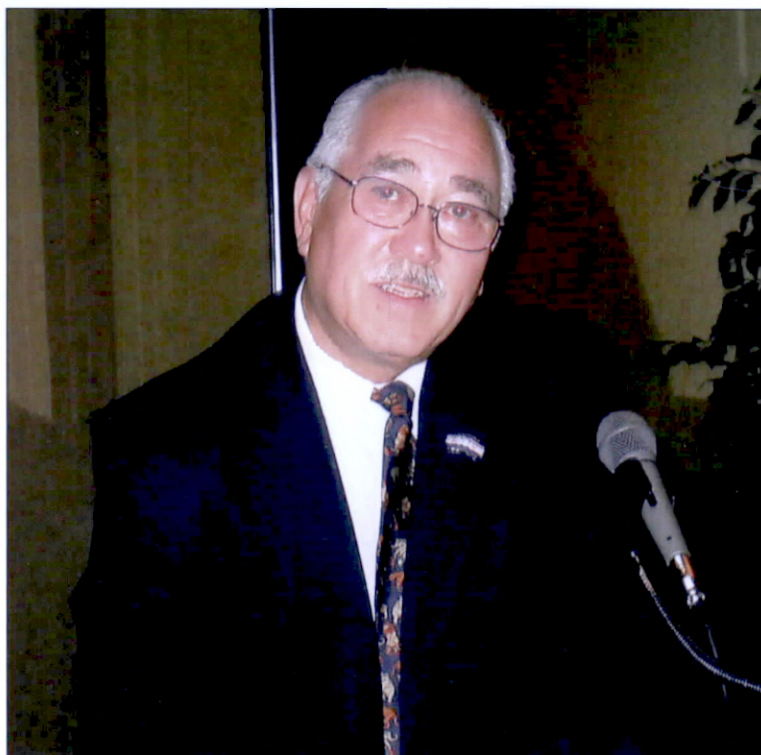
To ensure that his threat was put in motion, the executive kept Archie away from the "good shows."

The final straw came when Chan's overseer called him in Chicago and ordered him to drive overland in wintry weather to Tacoma, Washington. "He had an ice show, a small show that was a loser," Archie recalled the conversation. "And he wanted me to hire local people to be vendors."

Chan declined, opting instead for retirement.

He returned to Las Vegas in 1994, psychologically heartsick and physically ill with heart disease.

After recovering, he continued to go out on



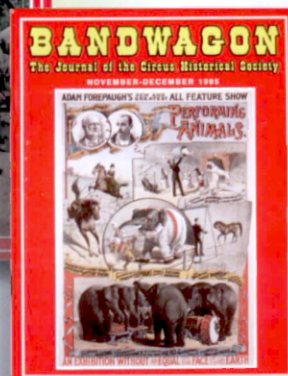
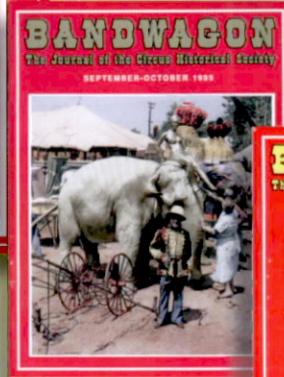
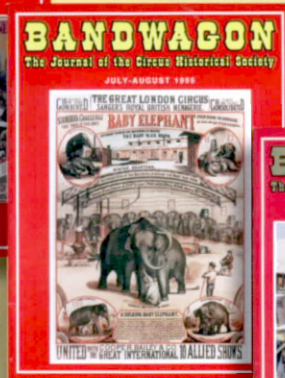
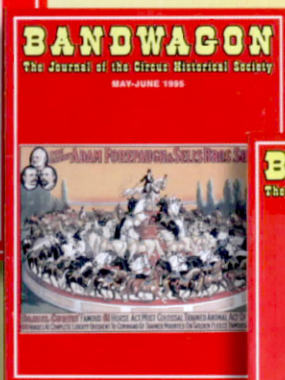
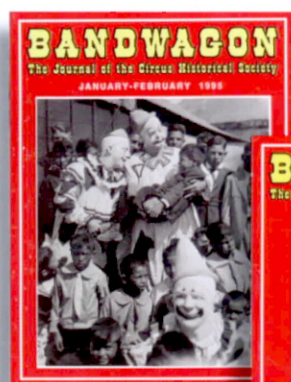
Archie Chan addressing the CHS at the 2007 Las Vegas convention. Pfening Archives.

occasional gigs. In the mid-1990s he joined a 64-piece windjammers band in Las Vegas.

"But I don't play the drums much. I mainly do things with concessions. I can almost pick where I want to go."

He particularly enjoyed returning occasionally to Atlanta for a sales engagement with the Sesame Street stage show, because it permitted him to visit his mother in Savannah. BW

With a background in print, electronic media and public relations, Lane Talburt considers himself more of a storyteller than a historian. His video encounters with circus people such as Archie Chan have been more often the result of serendipity rather than planning.



Hurray! Hurray! Hurry!

For a limited time only the Circus Historical Society is offering all six 1995 *Bandwagons* as a group for \$25.00, about half the listed price.

In 1995 *Bandwagon* published articles on the Herriott family, the Ringling-Barnum cookhouse, the Beers Barnes Circus, Kansas circus history, Forepaugh-Sells 1910-1911, truck show parades, Bill English, Venice, Florida and the circus, billposting, and many other subjects.

Dan Draper, Stuart Thayer, Fred Pfening III, Joe Bradbury, John Staley, Bill English, Richard Reynolds, Fred Pfening, Jr., Harold Barnes and Mark St. Leon were among the authors.

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Al G. Barnes *Circus News 1935*

by Ray Harris

Clown Ray Harris didn't leave much of a paper trail. Everything we know about him happened in a ten year period. He was on the Al G. Barnes Circus as early as 1929 and as late as 1938. He spent the 1937 season on Hagenbeck-Wallace. He had ambition. From letters to circus fan Burt Wilson in early 1938, we know he and an angel were considering taking out a truck show. He wasn't a bad writer and didn't lack for opinions. He wouldn't join the Cole show in 1938 because of "that rotten cook house and parades," and later that year had no time for union efforts to organize the performers on Barnes. "The guy who started all this union stuff," he commented, "should be strung up in my estimation." In 1935 he sent Wilson the typescript that follows about events on the Barnes Circus in Canada from June 29 to July 21. Some changes in punctuation have been made and the spelling has been regularized. Otherwise the document is the same as what he sent Wilson.

police will not let them proceed to Ottawa. The town people are not allowed to feed them or help them in any way. We were told not to talk to them. An air of expected trouble prevailed all over town and more so on the lot, as members of the strikers were there watching us set up, etc. We were glad to get out of town and a good thing that we did as the next day (Sunday) there was rioting on the streets with one killed, numerous hurt and thousands of dollars damage to the buildings in the heart of town. No trouble for us, however.

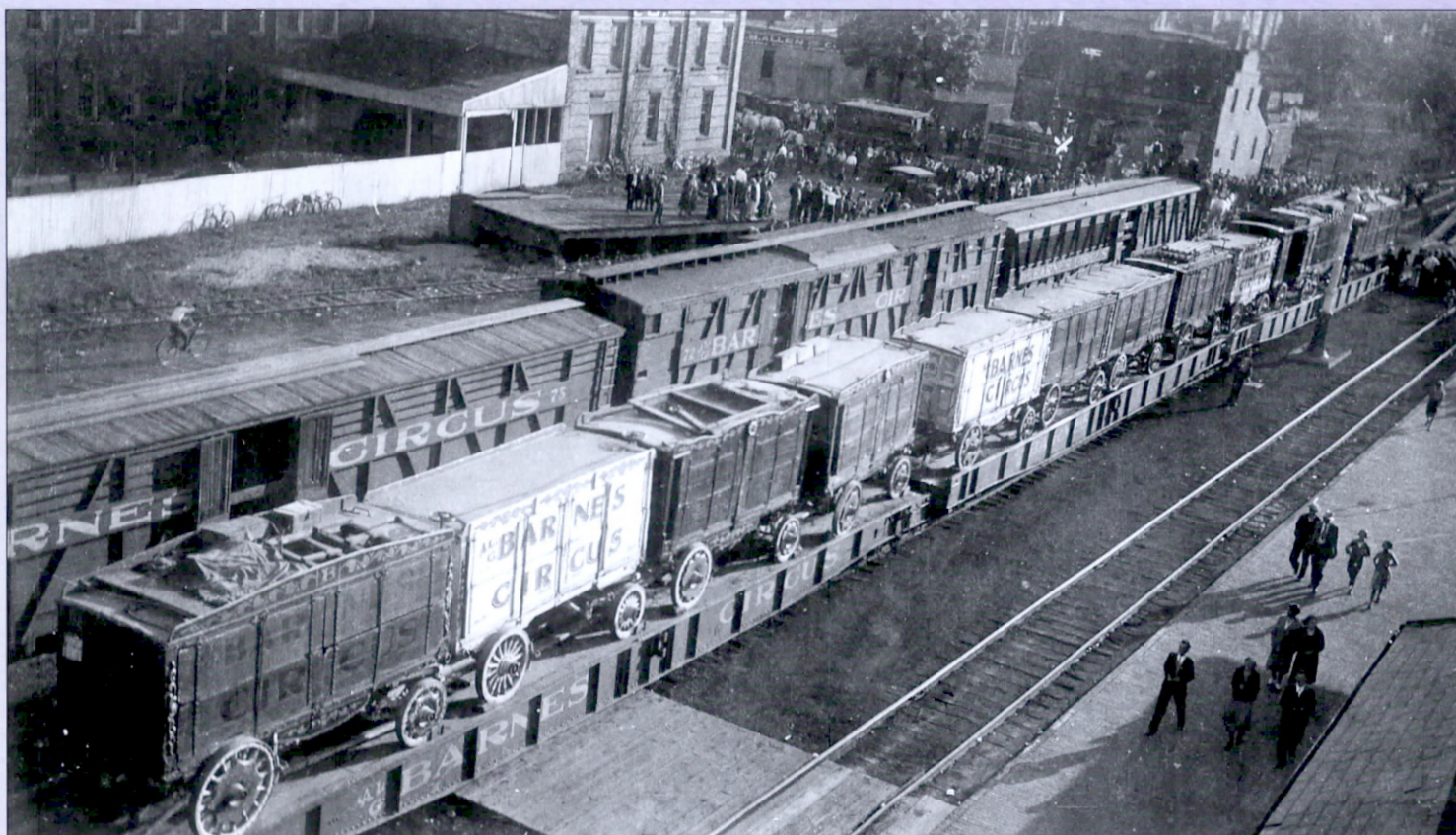
Sunday, June 30—Run into Winnipeg. In at 4 p.m. and up town in time to see thousands of other marchers coming into town on their "On To Ottawa" march still the air of expected trouble prevailing. That evening the marchers were informed that they would not be allowed to leave town. They proceeded to "take" a local soup kitchen and told the police that they would not leave the



The Barnes show had weather problems in 1935 before entering Canada. The front baggage wagon is mired in mud at Hollywood, California on April 8. All photos from Pfening Archives.

Saturday, June 29—Regina, Sask. Showing outside the exhibition grounds in some of the buildings of which were quartered 1500 Northwest Mounted Police, there to try to preserve order, due to some 4,000 relief camp strikers in there on their "On to Ottawa" march (like our Bonus marchers) they were stopped there and the

building until they were allowed a local billeting point with three meals a day furnished by the government, or allowed to proceed to Ottawa. They then started to make speeches in front of the building, where at least 5,000 people, both sympathizers and onlookers like ourselves, gathered to hear them and to see what would happen. Some of the speeches were most radical, and all of them addressed the crowd with "Comrade" and the communist sign with the crowd responding to it with great gusto. The police were booed every time



Barnes stock and flat cars during the 1935 season.

they made their appearance, and one old lady speaking in a broken dialect said "I am from the land that they now call the Bolsheviks. There came a time in that country when we had to throw bombs, that time is coming in Canada and it might as well be now," at which the crowd yelled its approval. The police were powerless to disperse them and they finally called the fire trucks and they did so with streams of water. That did no good as they would congregate at some other place to continue their speaking during the entire night. The more one sees of Canada the more one is lead to think that there is something brewing. What it is we do not know, but whatever it is, it surely shows in the business of the show as it has been very poor since we have been in Canada.

Monday, July 1, Dominion Day, Winnipeg. This is Canada's day like our 4th of July, weather hot and business only fair.

Tuesday, July 2, Winnipeg. Hot again, night business the best of the week.

Wednesday, July 3, Rainy River, Ontario. A 230 mile jump in here and a late arrival no doubt saved the show many law suits and thousands of dollars damages as it was one of the most eventful days ever put in on this show. Very hot when we got in and they were just finishing putting up the big top

Big top in process of being blown apart at Rainy River, Ontario, July 3, 1935.

about 2 p.m. In another half hour doors would have been open to let in what looked like would have been a very good house for such a small town, when a storm hit and when I say storm I MEAN STORM. It uprooted trees as large as a foot in diameter, and a church across the street from the lot had part of the roof blown off along with a tall chimney. All over town small out buildings, chimneys and roofs were blown off. The wind was accompanied by a rain storm where the water literally came down in buckets full. The first thing that went down on the lot was the cookhouse. The top was badly torn and dishes scattered from front to back. A few of





Barnes Circus personnel assess the damage to the big top after blow down at Rainy River. Note bail ring on center pole.

Barnes midway at Rainy River after the storm. Side show banner line poles are still standing; the bally platform is in the front right. Ticket wagon is in front of bally stand.

the people in there eating at the time were slightly hurt from flying poles, etc. Then the big top went, three of the center poles breaking like tooth picks, and they are poles larger than telegraph poles. Of the 37 quarter poles only 7 of them remain unbroken, and how many of the side poles went I do not know. It is doubtful if there is





Barnes side show banner line in better times.



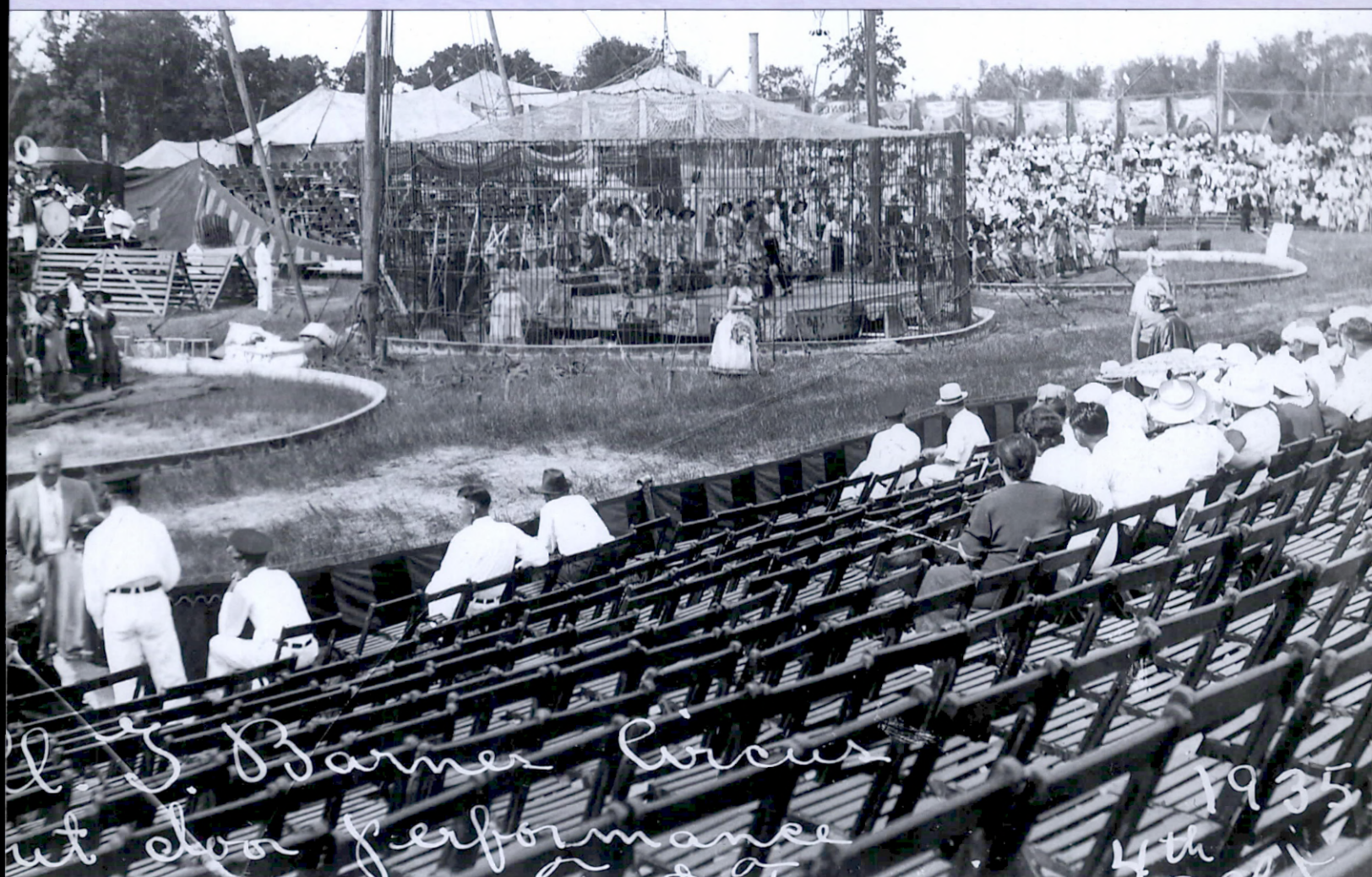
a piece of the big top as large as 10 foot in diameter left and it was left on the lot the next day rags.

The menagerie top went next and while it was torn badly it was sewn and two days later able to be made use of. The side show, and other small tops on the lot went with the first gust. The only top that weathered the storm was the dressing room which is new canvas this year and being headed into the wind, weathered it without damage. However, they lowered it during the storm or it too may have suffered. As luck would have it our trunks were not unloaded and did not get wet.

About an hour after the storm hit the rain subdued and the sun came out and it was decided to give a show that evening in the open. Of course the show had to be cut as no aerial acts could work, but we did give a show and to a fair house. This is the worst storm that this show has experienced in the past ten years, and we are only glad that a late arrival prevented the doors being open and many people being in the top where many might have been hurt if not killed.

Thursday, July 4th, Fort Francis, Ontario. In early and they were sewing all morning trying to get some of the tops ready to use, still showing in the open air. The usual big 4th of July dinner was served despite the obstacles, menu consisting of half fried chicken, asparagus, peas, creamed potatoes, combination salad, strawberry short cake, fruit. They then intended to have the regular celebration, but another storm came up just as they were ready to start and we again took refuge in wagons, etc., till it blew over. The rain did let up a bit and races were run in the rain and refreshments were served in the pad room, consisting of ice cream, cake, cookies, candy, fruit, etc., but though the celebration was not given in full

The Ward flying act at Fort Francis, Ontario, the day after Rainy River. Lacking a tent, the show open aired it.



Fiesta of the Rio Grande spec at Fort Francis on July 4, 1935.

Barnes center pole wagon comes off the runs during the 1935 season.



the spirit was there, and a good time was had by all. About 7 the rain stopped and it was decided to give a show and doors had just opened when again the rain came down in torrents and it was necessary to call off the show, and we packed leaving town about 10 p.m. for Fort Williams.

Friday, July 5, Fort Williams, Ontario. Menagerie up today for the first time since the storm, many people on the lot all day, matinee late starting to a fair house, and the night show well attended, night show just over when the rain started again.

Saturday, July 6,



Outdoor performance at Fort William, Ontario, on July 5. Eight elephants fill the ring.

Barnes draft and lead stock being unloaded during the 1935 tour.



Chapleau, Ontario. A 380 mile jump in here through the rain. A little tiny town of one street. In at 5 p.m. and it was decided to try to give a show in the menagerie top. The train was spotted and ready to start to unload when it was found that we were on the main line and no sidings were available. A passenger [train] was due which would have forced us to stop unloading 'till it passed, and to top it all again the rain was coming down in torrents (we are beginning to wonder if the rain ever stops up here). It was decided to call the show off and after feeding the stock and working men, we pulled out to make



The replacement big top arrived at Sudbury, Ontario on July 7. After furiously working that Sunday, the tent was in the air for the July 8 engagement. This image was taken on July 7 as the top was being prepared. Note center poles on ground in middle of photo.

another 180 miles to Sudbury where another big top awaits us and we hope better weather and luck.

Sunday and Monday, July 7-8, Sudbury, Ontario. An early arrival Sunday allowed all day for Cap Curtis, boss canvas man, and his assistants to work on the last year's Hagenbeck Wallace big top that winter quarters at Peru, Ind. sent on to replace the one lost in the storm at Rainy River, Ontario. Ten north woodsmen hired by the show worked all day and until 9 p.m. to prepare center, quarter and side poles to replace ones lost. Their ability to use axes and a special adze was marveled at by all who witnessed them. News of the death of Wm. Denny, boss porter, at a hospital in Winnipeg was received here.

Tuesday, July 9, North Bay, Ontario. Lot by the side of a large lake and a nice day, with many taking advantage of a swim. Between shows and in the morning some of the folks made a trip out to the home of the Dionne quintuplets, a few of them were able to get a glimpse of the children who have obtained so much front page publicity. Between shows the entertainment portion of our belated 4th of July program was given in the big top, and as the announcer Mal Smith said "this is our one get together of the season and let's all enjoy it," which we all did. Many of the skits and acts were timely and full of wit and sarcasm. By popular vote first prize went to Alma Taylor and Mrs. Thornton, with their "The Dr. and the country girl" with the biting satire on happenings back of the big top. Second prize to Vernis Michel and Marie Wolfe in their "Battle of the microphone," and third to Mayme Ward and her take off of little Peggy Machel's web act. All of the acts showed many hours of thought and preparation and no small amount of hidden talent. Refreshments were served in the back yard again through

the courtesy of Mr. [Buster] Cronin who furnished the ice cream to go with the cookies and candy left from the 4th.

Wednesday, July 10, Haileybury, Ontario. A long haul and a small town, with the regular daily shower in mid morning. Again on a large lake with more swimming and boating between shows.

Thursday, July 11, Timmins, Ontario. One of the best towns as far as business was concerned of the Canadian trip, one of the new gold mining towns of Northern Ontario. Two very unfortunate accidents marred the day however. First was the auto accident on the road into town in the morning, when Eddie Horton, radio man, and Joe Sullivan, banner man of the show, were involved. The former suffered two broken arms and confined to St. Mary's Hospital for six or more weeks. Sullivan was only cut and bruised.

The second accident of the day occurred when during the evening performance, first ascension of the iron jaw ace Vivian Roasrd fell from the top of the tent, receiving a very badly crushed ankle. Through the quick work of a local doctor, who happened to be in the audience at the time, she was rushed to the St. Mary's hospital and while it was first thought amputation might be necessary, the foot was set, and she is now well on the way to recovery, and it is hoped no ill effects will be suffered.

Friday, July 12, Kirkland Lake, Ontario. Another gold mining town with much building activity, business again good. Cook house in the open as there was very little room on the lot, the usual daily rain storm coming up just as lunch was served. Many were seen with sandwiches taking advantage of a nearby grand stand to eat and avoid the rain.

Saturday, July 13, Noranda, Quebec. The first of the French speaking towns, and the first show to ever show there. Large gold

mines close to town. Between shows a special picture show was arranged at the local theatre by Harry Burt, with a large turnout.

Sunday, July 14, Run into Shawinigan Falls. An all-day run into Shawinigan Falls, through the wilds of Northern Ontario. The largest town, Parent, where we fed and watered, with a population of 400, was practically the only town passed thru on this 454 mile jump.

Monday, July 15, Shawinigan Falls, Quebec. Another French town with the lot right in the heart of town. Very few English speaking people, with those on the show who could speak French pressed into service for interpreters. During the night concert Margot Gormar fell in trick riding, and out of the show for some time with a wrenched leg.

Tuesday, July 16, Quebec City, Quebec. The largest town in Quebec, showing in the Exhibition grounds, with every one using the sign language to talk to the natives as few can speak English. Just as the night show was over a heavy rain storm came up and most everyone was soaked on the way to the train. La Vern McClain thrown from her horse in the manage act evening performance, and too suffered a wrenched leg.

Wednesday, July 17, Campbellton, New Brunswick. A run of 304 miles in with only a night show billed, all day making it due to a late departure from Quebec City. Along the banks of the St. Lawrence River most of the day. One hardly realizes what a large river it is till making this trip in the daylight. Many beautiful vistas on the river and islands along the way.

In at 6 p.m., but due to a hill and darkness overtaking the setting up of the show, the show did not start till after 11:30 p.m., to a fair house, out at 1:45 p.m. [a.m.].

Friday, July 19, Newcastle, New Brunswick. Small town with the lot by the tower of what was at one time the largest and strongest wireless sending station in the world, now dismantled.

Saturday, July 20, Amherst, Nova Scotia. Good grassy lot with the front of the lot having the appearance of down south with so many "snack" stands and merry go rounds, etc.

Sunday, July 21, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Long haul up a steep hill with a late arrival delayed the matinee, fair business on the day. The fourth death of the season occurred here, with one of the pony boys, a Canadian who had been on the show two weeks, dying of heart failure after the night show.

Appendix

The July 20, 1935 *Billboard* carried the following account of the July 3 storm in Rainy River, Ontario, entitled "Barnes Show in Tornado."

Noranda, Que., July 13.—With a long run out of Winnipeg, Man., arrival in Rainy River, Ont. was somewhat delayed. It had been five years since Al G. Barnes Circus had been in this section of Canada. A ferry crosses Rainy River to the Minnesota side, and many came over.

At 1:30 p.m. just as Bill Curtis raised big top and had started to place seat stringers a tornado came along. The gale struck with sudden fury. Roofs of near-by houses began to lose their shingles and air was full of flying debris. There seemed to be a great downward draft as big top was flat on the ground almost immediately, with 85 per cent of quarter poles torn to splinters and three of the four center poles snapped in two. Same thing happened to menagerie tent except it was not torn so badly. Cookhouse tent was down. Dressing-room top was lowered immediately after lead stock was taken outside, and the top was not damaged. Side show was cut down just before full force of the gale struck, so with very little repair was as good as ever. Walter McClain got elephants outside before menagerie was down and they stood chained together throughout the storm. Hard rain accompanied the wind but in less than an hour it was over. Afternoon show was eliminated, but a night show went on under canopy of the stars. No one was hurt very seriously, although all received a good drenching, as it was almost impossible to find any shelter.

Fort Frances was July 4 stand, and not only had a special show been scheduled to take place for amusement and recreation of showfolk, but also a fried chicken dinner was to be served by

Flats coming into Stratford, Ontario, August 9, 1935.





The belated 4th of July burlesque performance was given between shows at North Bay, Ontario on July 9, after being postponed because of the Rainy River storm. Ballet women posing here did a take off of a song in Fiesta of the Rio Grande spec.

George Tipton in cookhouse. Chicken and trimmings had to be ordered out of Winnipeg. Good afternoon crowd. Menagerie was also in the open. Following matinee dinner was served, minus any covering, near some trees. Late comers had to hurry, as clouds began to gather. Rain it did, and Manager S. L. Cronin called off night show.

In Fort William menagerie was put up, but the two shows were given without big top. Good business, rain holding off until just at finish of night show.

Chapleau was billed for night show only on July 6, but unfortunately, with the rain it was thought advisable to call this off and show train proceeded to Sudbury.

S. W. Gumpertz had wired Mr. Cronin that another big top would be at Sudbury July 7. New poles had been procured although in the rough. Several local "loggers" with their drawing knives and adzes worked all day Sunday with circus crews preparing poles for use early Monday morning in erection of canvas. Big top is a 160-foot round top with three 50-foot middles. Sudbury was a good stand, with things back to normal and all tents in air again.

North Bay on July 9 was scene of special burlesque show that had originally been planned to take place July 4. This is a yearly event and takes place between shows.

Commencing with a spec, led by Ione Carl, show which followed, although a burlesque on other artists, proved the marvelous versatility of circus folk. Wellington Mack proved very efficient as emcee. Ova Thornton and Alma Taylor started burlesque numbers with one about the doctor's tent on what might happen

there. Pork Chop Chapman and side show band was next. Little Tosca Canestrelli, trapeze number. Arthur Pearson, with a real laugh about a wire walker, and Mrs. Pearson gave an inimitable serpentine dance. Mel Smith, pantomime of hunting and killing the goose. Margaret Garner fell all over track showing what may happen to those that spend all their spare time playing poker. Frank Chicarello, George Geanack and Babe Thomasson came into ring in tights astride two rosin backs and proceeded to give a burlesque riding act that to showfolks was funnier than even "Poodles" might have been to a real circus audience. Posing girls gave their impression of Canestrelli ladder act, with dogs and everything. Ottavio Canestrelli and son gave a clown skit of William Tell. Ballet girls, led by Chatita Escalante, gave their idea of how Spanish number in Fiesta of the Rio Grande should be handled. Vernis Mitchell and Marie Wolfe had a battle over the "mike," the mike in this instance being a wood prop. Mayme Ward gave a splendid imitation of little Peg Mitchell doing her act on web.

Show ended with a takeoff on statuary number. Posers were Frank Chicarello, Jack Fenelon, George Geanack, Ralph Carson, Wellington Mack and little Patsy Reed. Men were picked for their size, all being over 200 and Patsy just a little thing. Act necessitated rehearsals and wardrobe, and Frank Chicarello has been moving factor in keeping interest alive after almost a week of postponements. Milt Taylor announced that three prizes had been awarded as to what was thought most original and were as follows: First prize to Alma Taylor and Ova Thornton; second, Vernis Mitchell and Marie Wolfe, and third, Mayme Ward. BW

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Photos from set #94, Cole Bros. 1936.

The King of Phone Rooms

by Mike Straka

CALL LIST

The following is based on an interview with Joe Eddy Fairchild regarding his boss, Jimmy Nordmark, for whom he worked starting in 1977. He spent seven years with Nordmark's operation. He managed three shows including International Magic Show, Jubilee on Ice and the International All Star Circus. In addition, they produced phone dates with noted stars such as Bill Haley and the Comets and the Osborne Brothers.

Joe Eddy provided an organizational overview of the Nordmark shows. There were four managers who oversaw eight or nine phone room directors. Each town might have two or three different sponsors, so they could phone the same businesses two or three times a year with a different show and sponsor.

Joe Eddy indicated that it was easy to re-sign sponsors each year. Nordmark subscribed to the Ben Davenport theory. He would over-produce the show to cover any sins that came with the phone operation. Unlike Davenport, Nordmark never allowed vice or grift on any of his units. The shows included full lighting, live music, dancers for production numbers and the best circus acts.

The following is a sample production line-up for the International All Star Circus from 1976: Opening; Terry O'Brien, slack wire; clown alley; Miss Wendy's Chimps; Hines Rucker, ventriloquist act; Miss Ivey, aerialist; Hines and Patty Rucker, magic and illusions; Dan Carey, rola bola; Patty Rucker, uncaged leopard; intermission; dog act; Diamond Duo, aerialists; Patty Rucker, foot juggling; Dan Carey and company, balancing; clown act; Terry O'Brien, juggling and unicycle; Mike Rice, baby elephant.

According to Joe Eddy, Nordmark was honest. His word was his bond. In addition, Jim stuck up for his promoters. Of course, every person has his idiosyncrasies. Joe Eddy mentioned that Jim would never go out to eat with two of his managers at the same time.

For instance, Jim would not take Hines Rucker, manager of the International All Star Circus, and Joe Eddy to dinner together. It had to be on separate nights. The reason was simple: the managers would "gang up" on Jim.

Joe Eddy observed that it would be impossible today to run a show like they did back then. It would be hard to imagine today pulling up to a high school with semis and seven or eight truck/trailer units. They would square the janitor with \$20 to leave a door ajar. They would "hire" kids to help them unload (the insurance liability would be incalculable today).

Sometimes they would stay over on the playground. In many cases, they carried wild animal acts including an elephant act.

Nordmark ran one of the largest, if not the largest, phone operations in the country from 1977 up to the early 1990s. If Jim was not the king of

phone rooms, he was most certainly the crown prince.

Joe Eddy Fairchild retired from touring and started a magic manufacturing business. He produces high-end magic props for magicians around the world.

Recently, I was lucky enough to track down Leigh Ketchum. Leigh was one of Nordmark's key personnel. Leigh joined Jim's operation in 1977 as a musician, playing the trombone. Leigh had come off the Carson & Barnes Circus and was looking to make a change. By the early 1980s, he had worked his way up to the position of manager.

Nordmark started in the business in a very small way. His first phone room was for Doc Bartok and was set up in the back of a barber shop in the early 1970s. By 1978, he was running his own operation and was on the verge of expansion.

Leigh indicated that Jim's major contribution to the phone business was his ability to perfect the operation. He didn't create phone rooms but, he certainly brought a managerial and business



Jim Nordmark, right, confers with show manager Hines Rucker, probably in the late 1970s. Leigh Ketchum Collection.

sense to the whole operation. He created systems and brought a real professionalism to each phone room. Leigh indicated that scripts for the phone men were constantly updated. He invested in machines that were able to identify if someone was home. This cut down on wasted calls and call backs.

Leigh indicated that Jim developed what would become the "Super Route." It included 60 cities that the shows played each year. These 60 towns represented the top grossing cities. Each town had a day and night phone room operation. During the day, businesses would be called and solicited. At night, homes would be called and pitched.

Leigh offered the example of Rochester, New York. The day and night operation grossed around \$250,000. The circus or ice show would play the date, and then Jim would simply swap out the sponsor and start the whole process over again for a different sponsor and show.

Leigh also noted that Jim always overproduced the shows to help offset the negative side of the phone business. He remembered Jim saying, "I hate the phone business but, what else would I do?"

Nordmark's battles in court are legendary. Leigh indicated that Jim prevailed in many cases and spent way too much money fighting them. By the early 1990s things started to fall apart.

Throughout his career, Jim had many court battles because, as the top phone producer in the country, he attracted the attention of many state attorney generals. In addition, Jim set out to contest some of the phone solicitation laws that were being enacted by state legislators. Jim hired and was represented by Errol Copilevitz, a Kansas City attorney who specialized in telemarketing and first amendment rights.

Perhaps Jim's most famous case started in Maine in 1986. The state sued him because his phone operations had violated the state's charitable giving laws. In effect, Jim's operation received more than 35% of the donation and he was required to disclose this to everyone his telemarketers called. This case worked its way up to the Maine Supreme Court in Portland, where Nordmark won. The state attorney general then decided to appeal this verdict to the United States Supreme Court. During this same time frame, a companion case was also headed for the Supreme Court—Riley v. National Federation of the Blind. Copilevitz handled this case also.

In the 1988 case, Riley v. National Federation of the Blind of North Carolina, the United States Supreme Court ruled that states could not regulate the amount of money that a professional fund raiser might be paid by a charity or stipulate a minimum amount

that must be given to the charity. The decision also noted that charities did not have to make an oral disclosure to customers about business expenditures. The court also upheld the decision on the Nordmark case.

In 1978, the state of Illinois attempted to prove that Nordmark & Hood had "excessive expenses" with regard to a phone campaign. The state was contesting the promoter's percentage. Jim fought back and took the case to court. It took eleven months but ultimately, Jim won the case. He was awarded a \$75,000 settlement and received interest on an outstanding bond.

In Pennsylvania, the state attorney general sued Jim as an unlicensed charity. He had framed a "Don't Do Drugs" show that traveled in a semi-truck. With this show, Jim could get around the concept of limited seats. With the circus, the building had a finite number of seats. More often than not, Jim's phone room outsold the available seats by a wide margin. In addition, no local sponsor was needed. Copilevitz successfully argued that the show had a charitable aspect.

Not all of the court battles, however, worked out well. In 1979, New Jersey brought a case against Nordmark over the amount of fee taken by the fundraising company. He lost this case and his appeal went all the way to the Appellate Division. In 1981 the judges dismissed his appeal.

During the nine years that Errol Copilevitz represented Jim Nordmark, they developed a close friendship. In addition, Jim had many business proposals for his lawyer. He concocted a scheme to import African elephant semen. He just needed his lawyer to arrange for the permits.

They would become rich, breeding African elephants.

During a visit to Jim's office in the Sarasota Industrial Park, Copilevitz noticed a sign outside the building. The sign was in Latin and was not familiar to Copilevitz. He asked Jim what it translated to. With a twinkle in his eye, Jim simply said, "Shit Floats."

Jim Nordmark was a determined showman. His efforts prolonged the life of the phone business and he was well respected in the circus business.

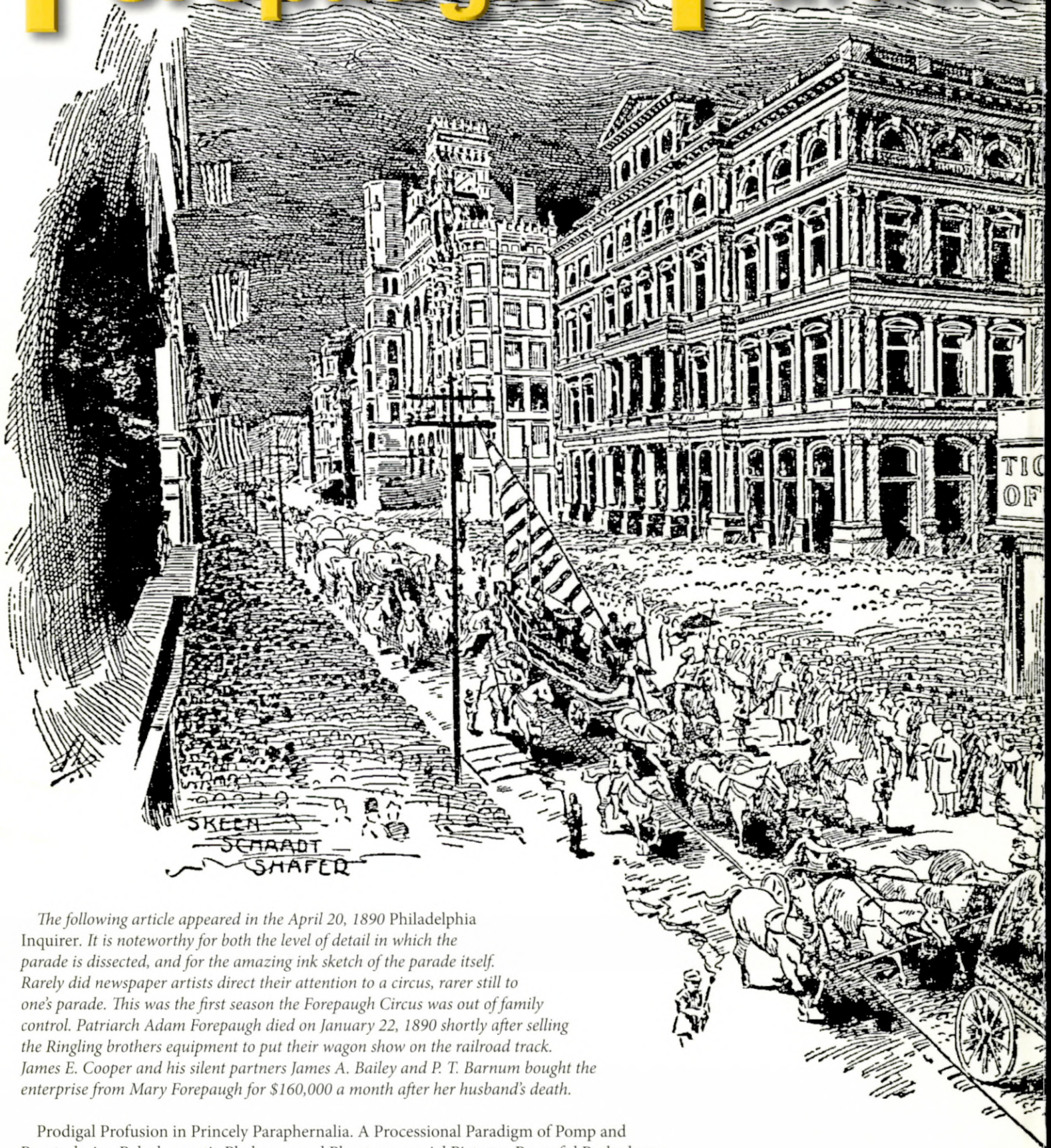
This article was made possible by the generous contributions of Leigh Ketchum, Joe Eddy Fairchild and Errol Copilevitz. BW

Mike Straka currently teaches geology and paleontology. In his youth, he toured with Circus Kirk, the Ronald McDonald Circus and Royal Hanneford. He was manager for the Philip Morris phone shows for twenty years. In addition, he has promoted ice shows, country singers and numerous other stars.



Before he moved into management, Hines Rucker was a multi-talented performer. Besides working an uncaged leopard he also did magic and ventriloquism. Leigh Ketchum Collection.

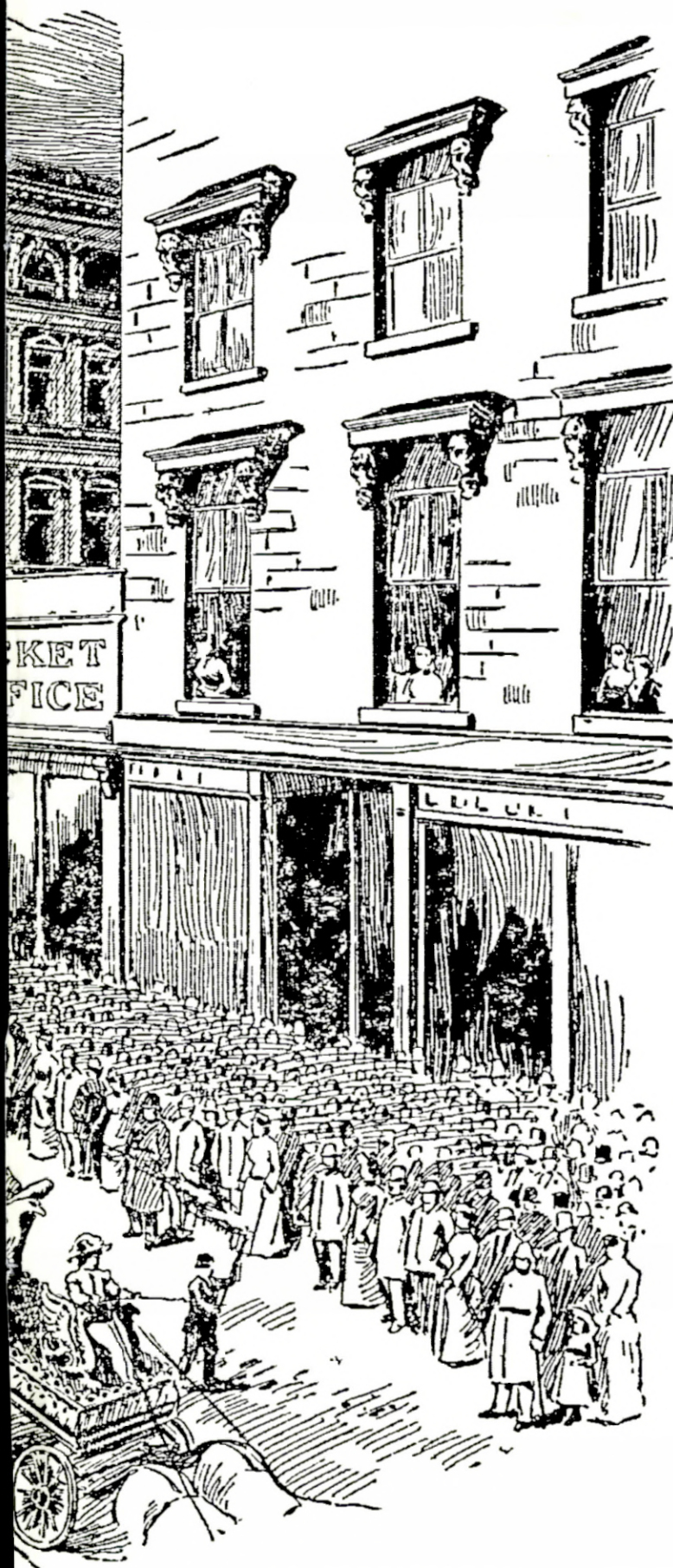
Forepaugh's Parade



The following article appeared in the April 20, 1890 Philadelphia Inquirer. It is noteworthy for both the level of detail in which the parade is dissected, and for the amazing ink sketch of the parade itself. Rarely did newspaper artists direct their attention to a circus, rarer still to one's parade. This was the first season the Forepaugh Circus was out of family control. Patriarch Adam Forepaugh died on January 22, 1890 shortly after selling the Ringling brothers equipment to put their wagon show on the railroad track. James E. Cooper and his silent partners James A. Bailey and P. T. Barnum bought the enterprise from Mary Forepaugh for \$160,000 a month after her husband's death.

Prodigal Profusion in Princely Paraphernalia. A Processional Paradigm of Pomp and Pyrotechnics. Polychromatic Phalanxes and Phantasmagorical Pictures. Powerful Pachyderms and Performing Proboscideans. Proudly Prancing in a Predonderating Pageant. Peopled with Potential, Puissant Pioneers, Patriarchal Practors, Pursuivants, and Pages, Prelates, Patriots,

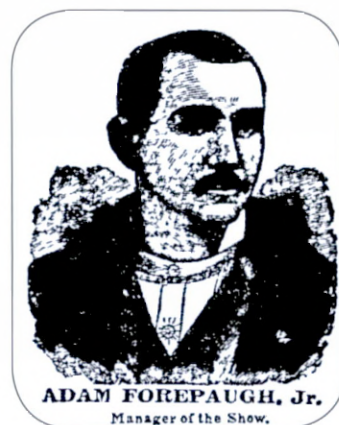
THE GREAT PAGEANT P



MISSING FOREPAUGH'S TICKET OFFICE.



ADAM FOREPAUGH, Sr.,
Founder of the Show.



ADAM FOREPAUGH, Jr.,
Manager of the Show.

Poets and Politicians, Pioneers and Pathfinders, Prairie Prowlers from the Prasinous Plains and People Polygenous, Powerful and Puny. Magnificent March of Multitudinous Marvels. Music by Its Masters Waited in Heavenly Strains and Drowning the Circumambient Air in Melliflous Melody. Hilarious Hesperian Heroes Hurrahing in the Key of C. The Noctvigant Nidus of None-Such Magnificence—In a Word It Was a Show Parade We'll Never Forget, You Bet. Forepaugh and Cooper are in it.

The steady advance of journalism in this country is something wonderful, and the newspaper of to-day that is in line with the rush of events is a power in the land. A newspaper should be just what the name indicates—a paper containing news, and in this late day in the nineteenth century, when communication with all parts of the habitable globe is obtained by pressing a button, the opportunities of a great paper for gathering news are many. The world is more active and hustling to-day than ever it was and every fleeting moment of time is pregnant with newsy events. What would have been a nine-day wonder a decade ago scarce commands passing attention now, and this being the case the paper that garners the news quickest and most effectually is the paper the people who are bustling want. A heavy percentage of the public want to see the news at a glance, simple, concise and complete, and others wish the events treated in detail; there are still others who are educated through their eyes, because their minds are not in proper trim for exhaustive newspaper articles.

It is the duty of a great newspaper to furnish the fullest possible account of the great events of the day, and place its news before the public in a clear and able manner in a way to reach all mankind fully; so that those who cannot read can see it; those who cannot see can hear it, and those who can read and see can doubly enjoy it, and everybody be made happy. And this end can be achieved where stenography, photography and orthography are combined, as in this impression of the *Inquirer*. Believing that great events should be given to the public in a way befitting the events, the *Inquirer* gives an illustrated page to the most glorious occurrence in the history of Philadelphia's pageants, the great night parade of Forepaugh's Great All-Feature Show and the Monster Wild West Combined, which was given here Friday night, 18th, and to which reference was made in these columns yesterday with a promise of to-day's extended article.

To prepare for the monster and hitherto unequalled parade the *Inquirer* sent a staff of artists to the Continental Hotel, and placed reporters in convenient positions in carriages along the line of march, where a full view of the glorious sights and privacy from the surging multitudes could be had. No opportunity for getting a full report was overlooked, and consequently the entire affair in detail is appended as it should be in honor of the greatest parade and greatest show on earth. The Forepaugh Show is such a Philadelphia



The Forepaugh Circus getting ready for parade in Providence, Rhode Island in 1888 or 1890. Bandwagon built by Fielding Company in New York City is in front. Three tiered tableau in back. Pfening Archives.

world-famous enterprise that here in its home, where it has grown with the city and been known with the city for twenty-seven years, too much in praise cannot be said of it, and there is much which the public does not know. Philadelphia is the cradle, so to speak, of

the big shows. Its founder, Mr. Adam Forepaugh, was a Philadelphian through three generations. One of its best citizens, its most enterprising and progressive business men, its heaviest taxpayers, its most wide awake and energetic speculators, and probably without exception the best known man throughout the world that ever walked its streets. Some men are great in pent-up Uticas; a man may be a great business man and be widely known to the trade; or he may be a great politician and be known to a State; a man may be a great statesman and known to a nation, a man may be a great litterateur and known to the world of letters; a great painter or sculptor and known to the world of art; a great divine and known to the church-going public; a great benefactor and widely known for his goodness, a great showman and known by name; but to be truly great and deservedly famous, to be a man of urbanity, of polish, of scholarly attainments, of large ideas, of perseverance, or originating talent, and producing ability; a man of means, of good standing, of high honor, of unblemished character, of world-wide experience and world-wide renown, one in whom the man subjugates the professional man, and in whom all the nobler qualities of humanity are blended with all the energetic qualities and moral excellences of the individual; to be such a man, and to be known wherever art has a home, genius a welcome, and goodness an abiding place, is to be a man like Adam Forepaugh, and thus far along, the world has only given us a few,

and two of them are Philadelphians, the founder and father of the greatest of all great shows, the one and only Forepaugh Show, which paraded on Friday night, the best known manager and best known show on earth and his successor.

But if the show was the property of Mr. Forepaugh for more than a quarter of a hundred years and nothing but death could take from its master, it requires a man as great to conduct it when its founder is no more; a man, too, who is widely known and who is accustomed to dealing on the broadest scale; a man of vim and vigor, of enterprise and energy and all the other great qualifications characteristic of his predecessor, and such a man is now its owner, projector and perpetuator, a man known in two hemispheres and in every corner of the globe, a man of means and brains, of energy and push, and that man is Mr. James E. Cooper. To Mr. Cooper is due the credit of giving Philadelphia the gorgeous sight it witnessed in that noctivigant nidus of magnificence—the great street parade, which is an innovation here in Philadelphia, and proved to be the biggest celebration the city has ever had; a parade in keeping with the size



The Forepaugh number one bandwagon at winter quarters in Philadelphia, late 1890. Wagon survives at Ringling Museum. Pfening Archives.

and magnificence of the show in which Mr. Cooper has but lately invested his millions, and which stands alone in the history of show, and is now bigger and better than ever it was. Preparations for the great parade had been going on for many weeks. Printers, painters, gilders, harness makers, smiths of various kinds, and many other classes of mechanics, such as are always employed by the big show here in Philadelphia, were at shop and bench busy to be ready for Friday night. Messrs. Adam Forepaugh, Jr., and John A. Forepaugh, Mr. Cooper's able managers, and the son and nephew of Adam Forepaugh, Sr., were here, there and everywhere superintending the getting together of the great divisions of the show, the wild West, the hippodrome, the circus, menagerie and museum of the overweening organization, and the entire cost of the parade will not fall short of a hundred thousand dollars. Those gentlemen left nothing undone which their artistic tastes, their ingenuity or their great knowledge of the business could suggest, and therefore it was an unqualified success.

The parade left the show grounds and marched out on Broad Street at exactly seven o'clock and awakened the stilly(?) echoes of the moonlit evening as it defiled down the widest and best street in all North America. Under the glare of a thousand varicolored lights and under the eyes of fifty thousand persons, a shout of welcome from fifty thousand throats rent the air and drowned the music of the advance bugle brigades. The writer was stationed at Broad and Jefferson Streets, where the great line, lying under the dimmed stars like a huge serpent, glittering, swaying, dazzling and gorgeous, wound its magnificent length over the smooth asphalt and straightened itself out with a preparatory dressing to the centre of the street, could be seen. All travel on Broad Street was suspended, the busses ceased to buzz and the whole rapt attention of a hundred thousand bright eyes, in which all the polychromatic splendors of the parade were reflected, looked down upon the glowing mass from balcony, window and door step and gazed with wonder-rounded eyes from curb, pave and street. The crowd was a well-behaved, decent one, though a tightly-packed mass of humanity, and from the seat of the carriage the reporter beheld many of Philadelphia's first people. Young and old, grave and gay, winsome, frolicsome and jolly. The milliners will be well patronized for days to supply new flowers for the crushed Easter bonnets, ribbons will be in demand and the dealers in gentleman's hats will reap a harvest, but O, what a feast the chiropodist will have. Talk about corn in Egypt, but there were corns in abundance on Broad Street last night—and they were well trod on.

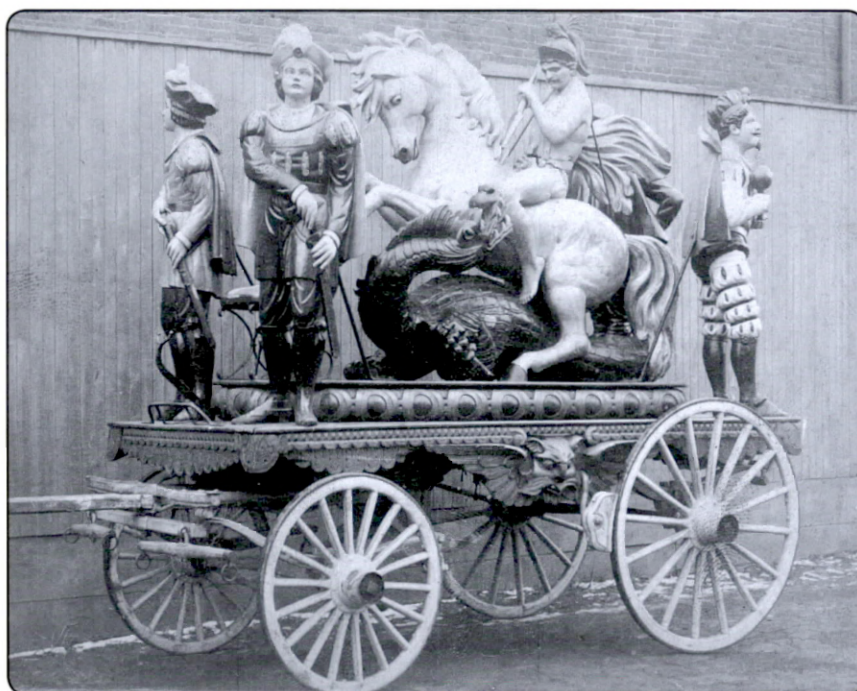
Here It Comes! Here It Comes!

went up the cry as the first blinding light from one of the huge calciums struck the vision of the writer.

Here It Comes! Hurrah for Forepaugh!

And truly a well-kept promise was fulfilled. Radiant with myriad splendors, the head of the parade passed by, and with a blast on brazen trumpets that brought visions of Rob Roy and other celebrities to the reportorial mind, the cowboy buglers, richly dressed in picturesque Western garb, with their ambrosial and

raven locks flying all unconfined from beneath broad sombreros, and mounted on spirited ponies, led the way. A battalion of mounted police came next in line, a fine-looking body of men. Marching with such order as is observable only in drilled bodies, their line was well displayed, and they made way for the people, so to speak, as they went on. With a merry rat-tat-tat-tat, the various drum corps followed the "cops." There were snare drums and bass drums and tom-toms and gee-gaws without number beating merry rounds and reminding the populace that poor McGinty, that rash and unfortunate Milesian, was still submerged in the briny.



The St. George and the Dragon float not long after being removed from the Lion bandwagon, now at Circus World Museum. Photo taken in late 1890 at Forepaugh winter quarters. This statuary was still on top of the Lion wagon during the 1890 season. Pfening Archives.

A band chariot of magnificent proportions and bearing many carved figures in relief came next. It was truly a golden chariot and shed a bright while light away ahead of the line from a calcium light stationed on it. It was drawn by four Norman stallions, gayly caparisoned in silk and silver harness, and bore on its ornamented top a band of eighteen pieces. As it passed the reporter the band played "Annie Lalurie" and played it well. Forty mounted, gayly attired ladies and gentlemen came right behind the band. There were lords and ladies, couriers and courtiers, prophets and praetors, seers and sates, fairies and falconers, medieval knights and May-day maidens, poets and pages, pursuivants and patriarchs, heralds and hoy-doy, lancemen, archers, sportsmen, ladies fair, modest maidens, dairy maids and waiting women, strolling players and circus riders, and, in a word, a royal retinue. All the horses were gayly bedecked, as was fitting for the great occasion.

Next in order followed a grand tableau car drawn by many ponies with Neptune bearing his tripod and emerging (unlike McGinty) from the green sea and presenting a formidable front as he scowled on the illuminated scene. To be in keeping with the realm of Neptune, the bottom of the float was decorated a la marine. Four Mexican horses next hove in sight bearing a griffen chariot; that

mythical beast being the prominent carved piece, was gilded from tail to tip, and looked fierce enough for anything. This was a very interesting and highly artistic display. The chariot contained sixteen Mexicans, clad in native costumes; their dark hair, black eyes and bronzed features were very handsome and caused many "Oh, my's," and "Ain't that sweets" from the young ladies in the vicinity of the writer, one of whom in her eagerness to see the handsome fellows leant forward and had a lovely hat squeezed, thus giving rise to the remarks recorded above.

The next chariot would make a splendid one for Knights of Labor to adopt; it was a bee hive, a veritable nest of industry with "just the teeniest little baby," as one of the aforesaid little ladies remarked, "that ever was seen." The chariot was drawn by four handsome horses and was one of the most effective pieces in the parade.

A lot of cages animals came next. The animals could not be seen, but the roaring and rumbling that escaped from the cages warned the small boy to stay away and whetted the curiosity to know what was in them.

An English tableau car came next—an allegorical piece representing St. George and the Dragon. As usual, the saint—not in full dress—was seated bestride an upright white horse while a writhing dragon of very fierce aspect was impaled on the saintly spear. As the calcium light fell full upon the green dragon, just as it passed the writer, it looked very realistic. The tableau was drawn by eight horses richly harnessed, the ribbons being handled by a Jehu suggestively Falstaffian.

Just as the dragon looked his fiercest a little episode occurred which the writer believes will always occur at parades. A portly gentleman succeeded in prodding the end of his walking stick between the fifth(?) ribs of an attenuated observer, who became wrathful, and demanded whether or no the portly person could not

have missed him with his cane, to which the portly person replied that he certainly could have missed the attenuated one but was sorry to say he did not, and in a hasty attempt to right the cane, gave an old lady quite a crack with it, accidentally, and altogether got in quite a row. Just as the lion tableau drove by, drawn by four Arabian steeds and looking, as the boy said of the balloon, "away out o'sight," Santa Claus, the genuine old Santa of our boyhood days, came next, still the same merry smile as of yore on his ruddy cheeks, still hale and hearty! still laden with good things galore, and still, oh! delightful inconsistency! white with unmelted snow albeit hurrying up and down sooty chimneys, filled with the blazes of innumerable Yule logs—but who would have Santa Claus otherwise? Oh, no, Santa is in it just as he is.

But here comes the dandy. A great huge band wagon, with tiers of gilded seats and great mirrored sides, with a world of carving and glitter and bearing on its massive and highly decorated roof fourteen musicians playing operatic selections that gladdened the listening ears within hearing; soulful music that awakened the night and stirred the hearts of the people.

Behind the band wagon and led by costumed equines, came twelve Arabian stallions, proudly prancing to the enlivening strains and showing up magnificently under the daylight-dazzling splendor shed by the many colored lights behind and a shower of prismatic fires from bursting bombs and rockets, for the air was ablaze with fireworks. A number of these stallions are trained to a state of excellence by Mr. Adam Forepaugh, Jr., and form one of the most interesting exhibits in the performances of the big show.

"Look Out for the Lion."

The above startling piece of warning advice was given from the crowd just as the writer looked to see a majestic lion lying in

a striking attitude on the top of a monster tableau car, while his keeper sat beside him with his foot pressed on the beast's neck! The striking contrast between the shaggy coat of the lion and the glittering vesture of his tamers made a pretty setting in the silhouette picture of the night. The positions denoted the power of mind over matter and taught that great lesson of man's supremacy and man's power. This truth was added to by the next tableau, which was the Goddess of Liberty, a very artistic piece of work, both in design and execution, pretty and patriotic, and in keeping with the loyal legion of the Great 4-Paw Show; four horses handsomely harnessed drew the fair goddess through the crowded streets and she was followed by another huge chariot with a royal Bengal tiger who, whether through accident or design, looked so anxiously at the reporter and withal with such longing and hungry look, that fearing his notes might never reach the desk of the city editor, he made his way through the crowd and decamped for the office.



The Cowboy band in Forepaugh parade, Bridgeport, Connecticut, June 6, 1888. Closed cage and tableau wagon carrying live lion are in front. Circus World Museum Collection.

The Parade at Broad and Chestnut Streets

A reporter stationed at Broad and Chestnut Streets arrived on the scene just in time to see a host of lady and gentlemen jockey riders, mounted on spirited horses and garbed in the conventional colors of the race track, the ladies wore riding attire that fell in graceful and withal modest folds over the flanks of their cobs and held their saddle like veritable centaurs. As for the male riders they could give any number of pointers to race-track mounts and not know they missed them. These riders take part in the great hippodrome department of the big show, and run spirited races for blood and prizes over the quarter-of-a-mile hippodrome track under the big tent daily. They were followed by eight teams of standing Roman riders. Each rider rode and drove two horses, standing with a leg on the bare back of each horse. The riders bore Roman toga and victor's wreaths of laurel and looked in each case to be the noblest Roman of them all.

As the Roman teams passed the corner the team attached to an express wagon belonging to the United States Express Company at the corner took fright and came near running into the dense pack of humanity that lined Broad Street, but was held by a policeman and their driver and led away. The episode caused more merriment than fright and jostled the crowd together in a very laughable manner, but as Philadelphia crowds are proverbially good natured, anyway, the affair was laughed off. A lot of animal cages came next in order in the following manner, and dens all open: Monster hippotamus, Cage No. 62; Cinnamon bear, Cage No. 54; Grizzlies, Cage No. 44; Leopards, with female trainer, Cage No. 43; Hyenas, Cage No. 58(?); Jackals, Cage No. 8; Tigers, with human trainer, Cage No. 29; Panthers, Cage No. 12; Kangaroos, Cage No. 57; a monster 3 horned rhinoceros, Cage No. 53; Den of pythons and other serpents, with East Indian snake charmer, Cage No. 5; Den of performing lions and their trainer, Cage No. 7; Crocodiles, Cage No. 9.

Then followed five huge tanks containing marine monsters and a beautiful giraffe cage with the long and graceful head and neck of the giraffe protruding high in the air, in the glare of the illuminators.

The Land of the Setting Sun

was next represented by the cowboy brass band, which came first and notwithstanding the fact that the players were fresh from the prasinous(?) plains of the Far West and brought their inspiring airs fresh from the slopes of the Rockies, they played with touching sweetness several old-time melodies that brought the past vividly to mind. "The Trappers' Delight," "Montana's Blue Mountains," "The Star of Wyoming," "My Bucker and Ram," and other stirring selections cheered the tens of thousands of people who lined both sides of Chestnut down from Broad as far as the eye could see through the illuminated streets. Cowboys on bucking bronchos came next, and as they rode through the streets gave an illustration of cowboy sports and pastimes by indulging in prairie games; they threw their sombreros, handkerchiefs, &c., on the ground ahead of them and picked them up with ease by stooping from their saddles as they rode by them swiftly.

The old Deadwood stage coach was a very noticeable feature of this part of the programme, and as though to show how time and customs of the past, the glories of the Occident and the glories of the Orient are commingled in such a vast affair as the big Forepaugh show, the chariot bearing the American eagle, a huge carved bird 8 feet high and 10½ feet from tip to tip, beautifully gilded and handsomely adorned with shield and scroll, came next, followed by the piece de resistance, Cleopatra's golden barge, truthfully and historically complete and furnished exactly as the original barge in which the charming "Sorceress of the Nile" journeyed to meet Marc Anthony. Then just behind the Hesperian heroes and the proud bird of freedom reclined the fair Cleopatra bedecked with



Forepaugh's Cowboy mounted band on the lot in Providence in 1888 or 1890. Five Graces bandwagon, covered by a tarp, is behind musicians. Pfening Archives.



Forepaugh parade in Worcester, Massachusetts on June 22, 1888. Back of Cleopatra's Barge in foreground followed by tableau wagon with lion atop. "A living lion loose in the streets" was a common feature of nineteenth century parades. American Antiquarian Society Collection.



Giraffe cage in Forepaugh parade at Worcester, 1888, followed by elephants wearing advertising banners. This is the earliest known image of pachyderms wearing banners in parade. The practice lasted at least until 1954 when Floyd King had them on his bulls in the King Bros.-Cristiani Circus parade. American Antiquarian Society Collection.



Cowboys in Forepaugh parade, Bridgeport, Connecticut, July 8, 1890. Circus World Museum Collection.

silks from the looms of Memphis and jewels from the temple of Osiris, surrounded by Nubian Eunuchs and Georgian attendants, on a raised altar before her burned sweet incense, while reclining at its base fair Georgian slaves played soft and homophonous strains such lovable lutes that the very voices of the night were hushed in gladness.

Immediately following the barge—and who but a great circus man could artistically harmonize such incongruities—came splendid specimen of a Mandan Indian bestride a bucking, belligerent broncho, who pirouetted, pranced and played constant didoes in a vain attempt to unseat the big chief. Following the big Indian came a half dozen tribes of untutored savages—Mandans, Ogallala Sioux, Dakotas, Blackfeet, Assinobines and Utahs. Many squaws and papooses on ponies followed the warriors, and Colonel Frank D. Yates was alongside the line in command. There were innumerable cowboys, herders, frontiersmen, trappers, pioneers, Mormons, scouts, ranchmen, greasers, miners, dare devils, desperadoes, mail riders and others, and in their midst

Captain A. H. Bogardus and His Three Sons,

the champion rifle and revolver shots of the world, marched proudly. There were many cowgirls also in line, looking as charming as wild and woolly Western charmers only can, and a whole emigrant train, that looked as such caravans did years ago, when they took their lives in their hands and started for the gold diggings, their motto being: "Pike's Peak or Bust," in the sturdy, poetical vernacular of the Westerners. This division of the great parade was a glorious one and spoke volumes of the all-comprehensiveness of the concern. The three great generals of the show's choosing came next.

Custer, Sheridan and Crook

Mounted on war horses and leading a troop of cavalry to participate daily in the great Custer battle, Mountain Meadow massacre, Sheridan's Famous Ride and other features of the exhibition. Under the numerous lights that were being constantly

shed along the line of march, the war-worn veterans presented a splendid sight and awakened visions of forces marches, campfires, battle scenes and other glimpses of western campaigning. They were soldiers every one, and the steady tread of their horses told of the discipline maintained by the big show, fully as well as the appearance and conduct of the scarred warriors themselves. The smell of powder and the war whoops of savages seemed to fill the air.

And still the parade came piling down along the thoroughfares; blue and red lights, green, crimson, yellow and purple lights from chemical fires shed their variegated lusters on the dazzling scene. Miles of solid wealth and a myriad of glorious sights were illuminated in a hundred different ways. The crystal vans, resplendent floats, gay costumes, prancing chargers, teams of elephants, camels, zebras and dromedaries could be seen as far back and as far forward as the eye could reach, the whole forming a kaleidoscopic panorama of unsurpassable splendor that will be long remembered in Philadelphia and that completely eclipses all the centennial parades, Mardi Gras celebrations and other processional exhibitions ever given here. The parade was two hours and eight minutes passing the Continental Hotel, where artists

were stationed to take the accompanying pictures, which were taken on the spot.

The crowds in from the country to see the great pageant were well repaid for their visit, and had they come a hundred miles to see it would have not only been satisfied, but pleased. The general verdict was that the great parade of the greatest of shows was the most magnificent one that ever took place in the streets of Philadelphia.

The Grand Finale

Of course, all the jollification of the parade caused a flow of spirits and a peep into Parlor C of the Continental Hotel, any time from 8 o'clock in the evening until the "wee small hours," would have seen the spirit flowing. There was a gathering in that famous hostelry at which Falstaff would have gazed aghast; his quart of sack(?) would have seemed a small affair to him, when compared either in quantity or quality with the "mortal likker," to be found in Parlor C.

The "boys" were invited without regard to nationality, creed, politics or position, and they responded in a way that made General Agent R. C. Campbell feel as proud as a boy with new red-top boots. "They came in single file, in twos, in threes, in quartettes; they came in carriages and afoot, but they all came briskly," said Campbell to the writer last night.

The big show never does things by halves, and consequently the spread was a great one and the assembly done justice to it. Heliogabalus never sat before a better board nor enjoyed one of his famous feasts more than the bright lights did that one.

Everybody that is anybody was there and had his friends with him, for it was an occasion where friendship guarded the door, wished every guest welcome and bade all enjoy themselves.

The West Philadelphia quartette gave a splendid lot of vocal selections and conspicuous for the absence of "Annie Rooney," "Where Did You Get That Hat?" and other popular though excruciating chestnuts.

Time fled by on golden wings, and when the good-byes were spoken the rosy dawn was peeping through the windows and



Indians in Forepaugh parade, Bridgeport, June 6, 1888. Circus World Museum Collection.

lighting up the nooks and corners in the hall and the day reminded the boys that it was

Forepaugh's Day.

And that the season was regularly christened, so arm and arm they strolled away, and watched the festive milkmen hurrying over their matutinal(?) rounds. Some of them reached home by noon-time and some—well, it was glorious night and everything was lovely, the town lost nothing by turning out en masse to see the great pageant, and, to risk an Irish bull doubled their loss by visiting the city of tents at Broad and Dauphin to see the big show yesterday afternoon and last evening.

Any show that is conducted on the same broad basis as the combined Forepaugh Show and Wild West Exhibition, who has such a proprietor as Mr. James E. Cooper, and such managers as Adam Forepaugh, Jr., and John A. Forepaugh—the ever smiling John—cannot fail to find a warm spot in the hearts of Philadelphians.

Only seven days hence and the great trains consisting of 54 cars, each 60 feet in length, bearing the big show, will roll out of town to

gladden the hearts of millions who are awaiting it on the tiptoe of expectation. Anticipation will become realization to the small boy and the old folks can again call up the chestnutty excuse that they will take the children to see the menagerie. Well, such is life.

And what would life be without the circus. Is there another amusement known to man that could have drawn out the tens of thousands of people who lined the city's streets on Friday night?

An Inimitable Circus

Nothing but a circus could do it and there is but one at that, and that one is Forepaugh's, and after all, what is older and more honorable than the circus? It was in vogue in Pagan Rome before Christianity was thought of. We're not circus sports popularized by Imperial decree in the Coliseum at Rome by the proudest of the Caesars, and were not hippodrome races run on the Roman Corso, and annual contests held in the Flavian Amphitheatre?

Long before this hemisphere was discovered the circus was the amusement of the masses, and pageants called out the people of Rome even as did Forepaugh's the people of Philadelphia.

The circus was indeed powerful even in those distant days. Good



Cleopatra's Barge at Providence, Rhode Island, 1888 or 1890. Pfening Archives.

horsemanship was something to be proud of, and excellence in athletics was a pass to the favor of the court. In those times physical excellence was deemed a higher attribute than mental superiority and, although the circus had not attained anything like the grandeur and all comprehensiveness it has to-day, it was still the amusement above all others sought by the people.

It Came to Stay

Philadelphia is away ahead of Rome, though, for since the days when Rome basked on her seven hills, beneath the iron heels of the Caesars, a new world has been brought to life on the western hemisphere. A new and most powerful race has sprung to the front, and with it a history replete with thrilling incident and romantic episode, with its traits, customs, people and happenings that give us

The Great Wild West.

A class of amusement that combines the elements of drama and of spectacular exhibits; an amusement that teaches historical object lessons; that engenders patriotism; that roots out cowardice; that

spreads the seeds of republicanism and shows in the most vivid manner the difference between a gilded empire and a country that has won its way to the highest place in the world's history by valor of its people and the principles they advocate. The Wild West department of the combined shows is the most perfect exhibition ever given to the people of any country. It is a fitting companion to the great circus, menagerie and hippodrome, and the whole makes Philadelphia the home of the world's greatest show, and that is Forepaugh's.

The route of the big show for the first three weeks is appended: Wilmington, Del., Monday, April 28; Chester, Pa., Tuesday, April 29; Trenton, N. J., Wednesday, April 30; Camden, N. J., Thursday, May 1; New Brunswick, N. J., Friday, May 2; Freehold, N. J., Saturday, May 3; Jersey City, N. J., Monday, May 5; Newark, N. J., Tuesday, May 6; Paterson, N. J., Wednesday, May 7; Orange, N. J., Thursday, May 8; Washington, N. J., Friday, May 9; Easton, Pa., Saturday, May 10; Allentown, Pa., Monday, May 12; Reading, Pa., Tuesday, May 13; Lancaster, Pa., Wednesday, May 14; Lebanon, Pa., Thursday, May 15; Harrisburg, Pa., Friday, May 16; Altoona, Pa., Saturday, May 17. BW



Forepaugh's faux military contingent at Providence, 1888 or 1890. Pfening Archives.

He's Moved His Factory 5,000 Times

SPARKS CIRCUS



by Earl Chapin May

The typescript of this article was recently discovered in the Earl Chapin May papers at the Circus World Museum Library in Baraboo, Wisconsin. While it seems likely this piece has previously appeared in print—after all May made his living with his pen—the place and date of publication are unknown.

Written in 1927, it is mainly a meditation on routing by Charles Sparks, owner of the Sparks Circus. He also comments on other facets of the circus business such as interaction with public officials, financial challenges, the weather, and opposition from other shows. In all, it gives a good overview of the business of circusing in the 1920s.

Charles Sparks, whose circus has entertained Americans for a quarter century, manufactures and retails his commodity in two hundred towns a year. But he has amassed a fortune by "finding where the circus money is." It's "get the business or go into bankruptcy," says this captain of an itinerate industry.

It was circus day but far from circus weather in the city of Poughkeepsie [on May 25, 1927] when Guv'nor Charles Sparks decided to wear his rubber boots. "They're in my stateroom on the circus train," he explained as he glowered at the soggy circus grounds. "I'll be up to my knees in mud before this show is off the lot tonight."

So I hurried him in my old sedan to one of the Poughkeepsie railroad yards where, at the end of a long line of yellow cars, the circus

owner had his only home. His Pullman residence was faintly visible through chilling rain two hundred feet across a cindered factory yard. Guv'nor Sparks alighted and on his sturdy legs strode intently toward his rubber boots until a burly watchman turned him back.

"No trespass. Private property," the watchman snapped, staring significantly at the circus man.

As Sparks emerged, bootless, from the factory yard his fiery glance fell upon a sign which read, "Hoe Manufacturing Company."

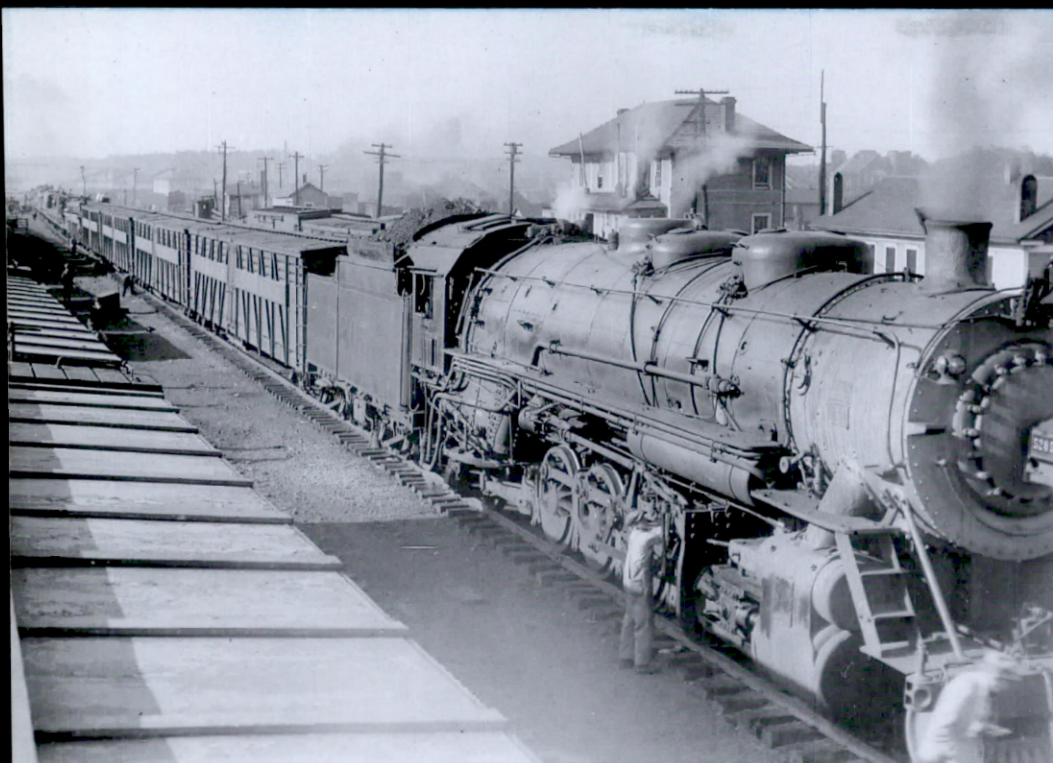
"Humph!" he muttered. "Guess that watchman was afraid that I, being 'a fellow with the show,' would steal one of his darned old garden implements."

Still muttering, he hustled around the factory buildings and waded through waist high and watery grass to reappear encased in rubber to the hips. As he plumped stockily into the seat beside me I suggested, "Possibly the Hoe Manufacturing Company doesn't make hoes."

"I don't give a whoop what it makes," the showman replied savagely. "Guv'nor Hoe or whoever runs this factory, couldn't make anything but a failure if he had to get her—the plant—up each morning and tear her down each night, and in the bargain sell his output for cash in a new town every day. I'd like to trade jobs with him for a month, especially in weather like we're having now. It would be a cinch for me, sitting at a mahogany desk with push buttons, telephones, office boys, stenographers and secretaries. And as for him, after he'd flopped on my job he'd have enough respect for

Sparks Circus lot on opening day at Macon, Georgia, April 7, 1927. Pfening Archives.





Sparks stock cars and flats soon after pulling into an unidentified town in 1927. Pfening Archives.

me to let me walk across his mangy lot."

Guv'ner Sparks continued to stress his contempt for a mere stationary manufacturer while he and I motored back to his lot or circus grounds, where the veteran of many a tented field was struggling with the elements. Three days and nights Sparks Circus and Incomparable Display of Trained Wild Animals had contended with the weeping skies At Port Chester, New York, the Monday [May 23, 1927] stand, spring rains had fallen heavily. At Stamford, Connecticut, the Tuesday [May 24, 1927] stand, the downpour had been heavier than the day before. When he and his travelling amusement factory had reached Poughkeepsie at eight o'clock that morning, the Guv'ner,—all owners are Guv'nors to circus folk—had found the proposed circus grounds turned into a millpond. There had been a hurried conference with George Singleton, his boss canvasman, and Albert Burnett, his twenty-four hour man, whose job brought him into Poughkeepsie a day ahead of the tented show.

"Won't do," they chorused as the morning wind kicked up wavelets, each wavelet having a dire meaning of its own.

"As soon as I got in yesterday," Burnett volunteered, "I tied up, provisionally, another lot, higher but a half mile farther from the loading runs. That's about our only chance, I guess."

So Sparks had ordered his five hundred tons of soiled and soaking circus stuff to be set up on the higher and more distant circus grounds and there I had found him at high noon sliding around in sticky clay while urging his weary roughnecks to "get her up." By 1:00 p.m. they had got her up, six acres of reeking canvas supported by weighty poles and oozing ropes. By 2:30 the tiers of wooden circus seats

were placed inside the big-top, and muddy water had been pushed by electric pump from the circus rings into another swamp. By 2:45 the front doors had been opened to the faithful few circus fans who never missed a show. At 3:00 the performance was in full swing although the funny clowns, daring tiger trainers and beautiful girls did their stuff in rubber boots.

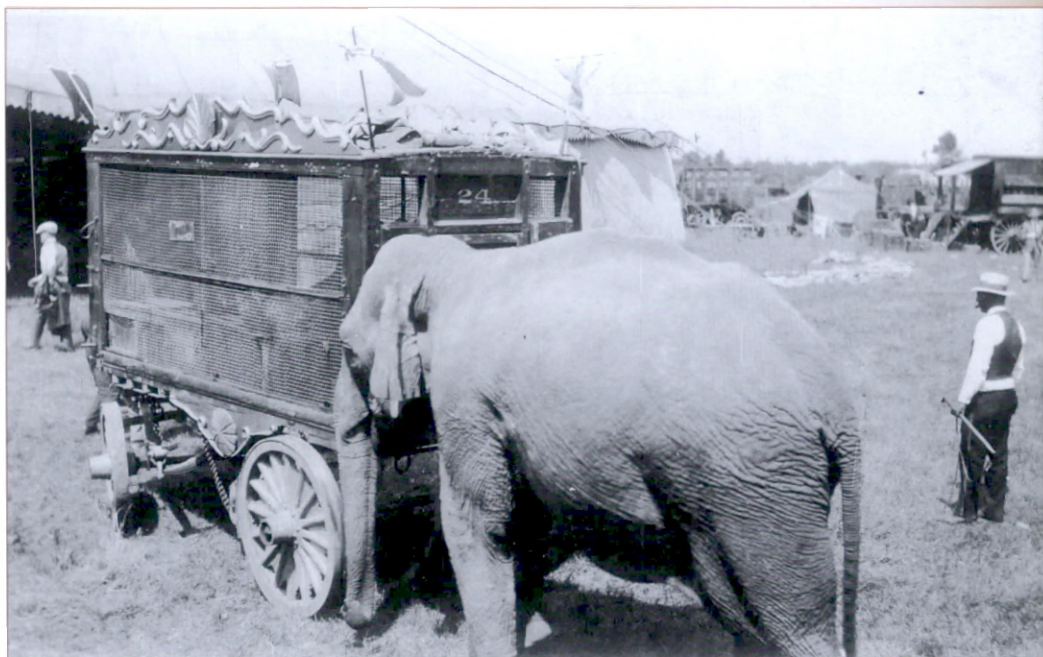
The lot was becoming softer every hour. The rain came down determinedly. At 4:00 Sparks and Boss Hostler Jake Posey began to figure on how to "get her off the lot" after Singleton and his roughnecks had "torn her down."

"Them ten-ton wagons 'll be deep in this clay while my baggage stock is trying to get a hold on that asphalt," Posey remarked stoically. "Once on the pavement our motor trucks 'll haul the wagons to the railroad yards but they'll bog down in this yellow grease in spite of pushing elephants and everything. Last time we got in a hole like this my best driver lost a leg—trace chain snapped and broke it clean in two."

"Well," Sparks admitted to the lowering sky, "this is one of those impossible days. But I've advertised two performances, rain or shine. We'll buck the rain tonight, all right. And after that we'll buck the mud. I'll lose almost \$4,000 on this stand, anyway—and Poughkeepsie, with a fair weather break, is a sure fire circus town!"

Many days elapsed before I saw Charles Sparks again. Then the sun was shining on his drying circus camp in Canada. The veteran trouper still nursed a fat cigar in his wide, firm mouth, still strode determinedly among the stained tents, still kept his eagle eye on everything. And his greeting was, "Wish Guv'ner Hoe had come along with me. We had four more days of rain and mud after leaving that Poughkeepsie town. It's easy to get her up and tear her down

An elephant positions a cage in 1927. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.



SPARKS CIRCUS

KNOWN UNDER THE SAME TITLE
FOR ALMOST A HALF CENTURY
AND
ALWAYS HONORABLY CONDUCTED
BY MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL
FAMILY

**JOHN H.
SPARKS**
Founder



**CHARLES
SPARKS**
Manager



**CLIFTON
SPARKS**
Ass't. Mgr.



when weather's fair and you've plenty of help. All you've got to figure on is moving \$300,000 worth of circus property every day. But I'd bet my best elephant against his worst weeding tool that Guv'nor Hoe would flop at it, with every break in favor of him. Any townner manufacturer would."

Thereafter as the days rolled by and the Sparks Circus rolled from town to town the dogged, energetic circus Guv'nor regaled me with bits of his hard earned philosophy. For Sparks he is a veteran at forty-six.

"It isn't so much of a job to run a first class circus," he confessed, "if it's properly organized. I mean if you have an equestrian director who handles performers and animal trainers; a bandmaster who keeps his windjammers in harmony; a sideshow manager who makes his freaks forget professional jealousy; a steward who serves three good cookhouse meals a day; a boss hostler who keeps his baggage stock in top form; a boss canvasman who gets her up and tears her down on time; a light man who is a wizard with electricity; a general agent who holds his billposters on the fighting line and a few other bosses or department heads who know their jobs, it doesn't take much of a Guv'nor to manage a tented show.

"Of course things happen suddenly now and then. When we were showing Youngstown, Ohio early in the spring [May 5] our star lady wire walker went automobiling with townner relatives after the matinee, and jammed into another car. She didn't report the accident to Equestrian Director Bert Mayo until the property boys had her wire set for her evening act. When Bert found she didn't have a leg to stand on—on the anyway, he had to make a switch, so he whistled for the Jap act that usually followed her. Of course the townners didn't notice the switch.

"Last summer when we were touring Canada my lion tamer got too familiar with the king of beasts. He slapped Mr. Lion on the nose. Naturally Mr. Lion slapped back at him. I had to wire for a new lion tamer after that. Once, I think it was in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, a heavy pole wagon got away and killed two horses at the bottom of a hill. The hand breaks wouldn't work, you see, or the driver's helper didn't know how to tighten them. While coming out of Long Island two years ago one of our flat cars jumped the track. That made us late into Stapleton, Staten Island, because our trainmaster and his razorbacks had to jack it on the rails again.

"And weather! Half the time my nose is pointed toward the sky. A few years ago we showed at Waterbury, Connecticut, when it was so hot all the factories and stores were closed. But my people sweated through two performances, so did 8,000 townners. It did them good. We showed one Fourth of July in North Dakota when a hail storm nearly froze the wagon grease on the hubs. Two years ago we floated down the Father of Waters two-hundred-and-fifty miles from Helena, Arkansas to Natchez, Mississippi, and ran into a cloud burst that I won't forget. A trouper may be troupng through Oklahoma and a twister may blow his big top flat or balloon it into the next thriving county. I have a keen respect for the warring elements. But the show keeps moving on. And the biggest problem in this business is to know when and in what direction to make a move.

"You see, it's different with my Hoe friend and his factory. He's probably been located in that Poughkeepsie town for twenty years. He'll probably be there twenty years from now. I'll bet he hasn't got up or torn down a factory building since Wilson ran for President. He makes his goods and sells them from the same point, always. I make mine—my circus program, which is my stock in trade—and sell it in two hundred different places annually. I have to, for even with their millions of automobiles, my cash customers can't come much more than fifty miles to see my show. So I have to take my amusement factory to where they're waiting for me. That's not so simple as it sounds. My stock in trade is not only seasonable merchandise. It must side-step poor trade conditions and, whenever possible, avoid competition in its line.

"When I became the manager and owner of the Sparks Circus in 1903 it was a little two-car show whose greatest problem was to keep out of the way

Poster used by show in late 1920s showing John, Charles, and Clifton Sparks. John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art, Howard Tibbals Collection.



Jack Phillips and his big show band in 1927. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.

of the big ones and to find hamlets, principally on branch railroads, where 'railroad lots,' close to the tracks were available. We had no horses or other baggage stock, just unloaded our tents from box cars to the circus grounds. But I kept that show going for two years and made a little money. I was too poor to lay up in winter quarters, then. Now that my stuff is hauled more than sixteen thousand miles a season on my own train of twenty cars, each seventy feet in length, and my daily 'nut' or overhead is close to \$4,200 a day. I lose sleep both summer and winter trying to figure where to route the thing.

"There are two general rules in all circus routing: Play the big cities and factory towns during the wet spring weather and follow the crops July first until late fall. But rules don't always hold in circusing.

"When I leave winter quarters at Macon, Georgia, in early April I do try to play Norfolk, Richmond and others of the better Virginia towns. You see it's warm enough down there then for circuses and plenty of towners can reach the lots even if the country roads are too soft to let the farmers in. But I aim to hit the West Virginia coal fields before May first. Those miners like their circuses, I'm telling you. They come out of the ground and into the tents to spend their money. I've seen a miner in that region shove a \$50 bill into my ticket wagon. It wasn't the only bill he had, either.

"But during recent seasons there's been such a rush to get to that particularly good coal territory that I've let the other shows fight over it. Southwestern Pennsylvania is always good late April territory while Akron and the other rubber towns usually yield real money in early May. But I jumped in and out of both those territories pretty fast last spring. Too many other shows were bucking me. In fact I jumped nearly across Pennsylvania—and had a banner week on Long Island, ahead of the other shows.

"Now, ordinarily, the New England factory towns are showed in June. Factory hands aren't busy with spring plowing. They can pay to see circuses any time if they have the money, and there are plenty of hard roads in New England territory so the towners can get to circuses in their motor cars even if it rains. But my general agent and the other scouts

I keep on the road ahead of me advised me that factory payrolls weren't fat last season, and that a half a dozen other shows were trying to be first in to the best New England towns. So I switched my route and showed through central New York into Canada. That's where I outguessed some of the shows that were trying to get the best of me.

"I made it a point to show Ithaca, New York, while Cornell University was still in session because there are several thousand circus-going college students at Cornell. That's why it's better to show such towns as Ann Arbor, Michigan; Madison, Wisconsin; Champaign, Illinois; Iowa City, Iowa; or Columbia Missouri, in the spring. The rah-rah boys are good circus patrons, though they get rough occasionally.

"Growth of the automobile industry has developed several first class circus towns in Michigan. Detroit will fill the big-top a solid week. In Flint, Lansing and Pontiac the motor

car concerns buy out a circus factory—one day's production, as it were—in each town, and make their working men presents of the circus tickets. The same thing has been done in Toledo more than once. But, although my show is growing, the automobile plants grow too fast for me.

"One of these plants sent for my general agent two years ago and said, 'We want to buy out your circuses on June 15th.' I was agreeable to their proposition since I was routed up that way and they were willing to pay the current price, \$.75 for general admission and \$.75 for reserves. But when it came to closing contracts and they found I could only put 6,000 on my seats the deal was off.

"We have more than 20,000 employees,' the automobile factory Guv'ner explained, 'and if we give this party we don't want to leave out any of them.'

"That disappointed me, temporarily, but when I showed that town independently I sold out twice. That made me feel better. I cleaned up \$7,000 in one day.

"If it wasn't for good days such as that few of the twenty circuses now touring North America would be able to keep the road. There's too much incidental grief and too many upsets in different territories. It costs about \$800 a day to make the railroad haul for a show like mine. That's twice what it was before the war. Lot rentals

Clown band in parade, 1927. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.





Side show manager George V. Connor making an opening to a big crowd in 1927. On bally stand with him are Hilda DeBarrie, center, with a cockatoo, and Anna Loving, holding a snake. Loving was the sword swallower in the side show. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.

and local licenses are getting higher every year. Payrolls are getting terrible. Union billposters are paid more than a \$100 a month in the clear. My band belongs to the musicians' union. Even my colored roughnecks or canvasmen got \$30 a month and food. So while the twelve million persons who patronize American circuses annually pay about a third more for their fun than they did ten years ago my net profits have not increased materially. And there are always local troubles to wrestle with.

"One season at a town we'll call Peanut Ridge, Arkansas, my contracting agent had arranged for city water, paying a local official \$5 and fifteen tickets. The water was to be taken from a hydrant near the circus lot by our water wagon. We carry our own water wagon, and have our own steel watering tanks for elephants, camels and horses with the show. About ten o'clock when we were showing Peanut Ridge the lot hydrant ran dry. I sent my fixer or legal adjuster down town to see about it. At the city hall a young clerk announced that the wrong man had been given the circus tickets, that it would take ten more tickets to get the water turned on again. He got the tickets and we got the water. I got sore, also, but I didn't kick. Wasn't any use in kicking.

"That shake-down is one of the penalties I pay for having a travelling factory selling my output for cash as I go along. Of course I have to pay a transient's taxes—for city and, in some states, county and state licenses; sometimes for making a street parade, always for city water and sometimes for using city streets.

"Please don't think all city officials are unfriendly to me. There are hundreds of regions and towns where everything is made smooth for me. It's just like getting back home. In many towns I show year after year. Vermont is famous for its hospitality to circuses. Warsaw, Indiana, is a mighty friendly town. Of course as my winter quarters

are in Georgia, almost every Georgia town is nice to me.

"But now and then the city hall is hungry. One town in Illinois was long famous for its official appetite. It had a nifty kind of shake-down which was practiced by a street commissioner.

"This commissioner, who has since retired, used to get ready for circus day by taking up the regular manhole covers on the streets between the unloading runs and the circus lot, and replacing them with old covers almost paper thin. Of course my heavy wagons used to break these ancient manhole covers. Then the street commissioner would put in a claim. The claim was for damages to brand new covers. The second season this happened my legal adjuster investigated. He turned up the trick when he turned up a cover. We settled for old covers that time and at the next election the voters settled with the street commissioner. Circus folks were not the only ones he had been working on.

"Wisconsin is particularly interested in workmen's compensation, but it is a tradition among circus people to take care of any employees injured on the job. So when I crossed the line and pitched at Kenosha I was hit a little hard when I got an official letter from Madison saying I owed the State \$1,200 for workmen's compensation insurance.

"I don't need any such insurance,' I told the official who explained the bill to me.

"Maybe you don't,' he answered cheerfully, 'but the State of Wisconsin thinks your six hundred employees do.'

"What if I refuse to pay it?' I demanded, feeling kind of hot.

"Your show will stay right here where it's standing,' was his come-back.

"I couldn't stay in Kenosha forever. It only a one-day stand at best and I was routed through three more weeks of one-day stands



The Sparks Circus baseball team in 1927. Clifton Sparks, son of founder John H. Sparks, is fourth from left, standing. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.

in dear Wisconsin. So I paid the bill and went on my way to other towns where my show had been advertised.

"A circus sells its goods on advertising. Sparks Circus has been going around the country so many seasons that I could wild-cat into many towns and by flash newspaper ads and my street parade make money on my merchandise but in most towns I know it pays to advertise. Hence a hundred billposters, lithographers who work the windows, banner tackers and press agents travel in advance of me featuring my trade mark or 'title' as we say in circusdom. That advertising brings the folks to town. The street parade and balloon peddlers bring farmers and towners to the circus grounds. The blaring bands and balloon men get my customers to the ticket wagon, where what the wise men speak of as 'mass psychology' comes into play.

"The fact that folks have to fight to get their tickets at the circus ticket wagon makes them more anxious to join the mob. When they find the narrow aisles of the front door crowded they become excited for fear they'll miss the show. But there's another reason for those narrow aisles.

"Children under three are admitted free. Children under ten come in for half price. Many a sixty-pound infant-in-arms is stopped by Front Door Manager [Fred B.] Hutchinson while mother produces thirty-five cents. And many a bearded specimen of young manhood is called to the cash register to kick in with the difference between thirty-five and seventy-five cents. Not that I'm hard on children. During a season I'm the host to thousands of inmates of orphans' homes. But one has to watch the circus pennies. You'd think so if you saw the amount of money paid out of my office, the ticket wagon, at each town. And the fact is that most of these folks who underestimate children's ages are not prompted by dishonesty. Doesn't everyone feel young on circus day? That's the way this circus owner figures it.

"Circus advertising, I might remark, is largely systematized. Almost anyone could advertise my

circus by spending \$600 a day, but it takes long years of tough experience to teach a trouper which towns on the North American continent are circus hungry and when they will be the hungriest.

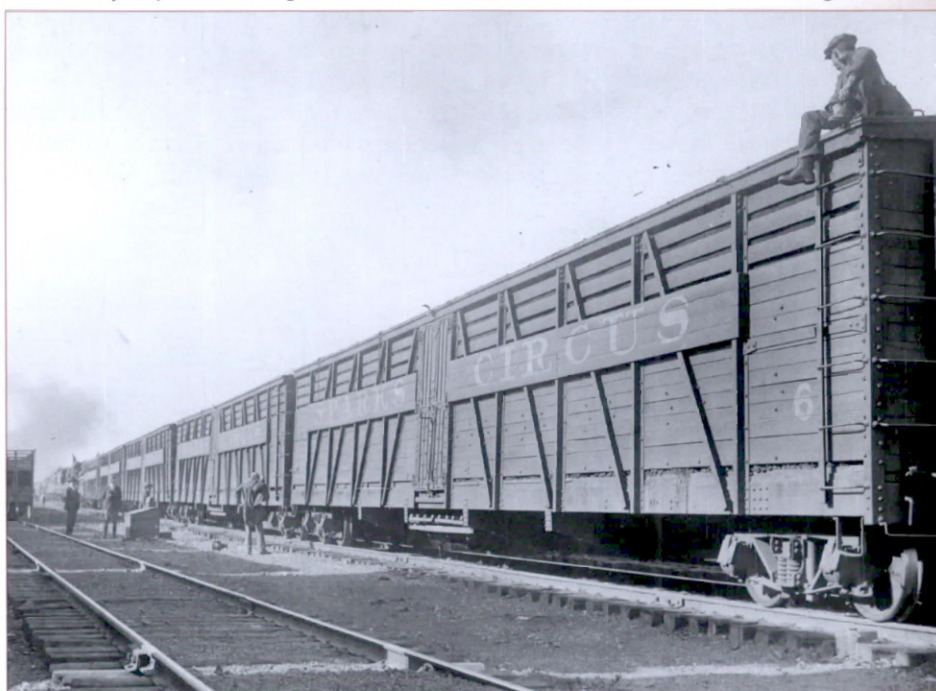
"Naturally, Illinois and Iowa are in the best condition for circus trade after oats have been harvested and corn, 'knee high by the Fourth of July,' no longer needs the cultivator. Corn belt farmers are at comparative leisure then. If they have done well during the previous year and crop conditions are encouraging it will probably pay to make the smaller towns of the Middle West in July and early August. I say 'probably' because too many other shows may be routed into that territory. I say 'smaller towns' because in all probability the bigger towns have been showed in the spring time. Few towns can stand more than one circus annually, but a little town of two thousand inhabitants which has not seen a circus for two years or more may produce ten thousand circus patrons in one day,

especially if crops look good. Postville, Iowa, is one of these. You'll find these good mid-season towns almost everywhere.

"One of my best days during the season of 1926 was at Caribou, Maine, where twelve thousand persons paid for tickets to our performances although there are only about five thousand persons living in the town. Caribou is in Aroostook County which is famous for its potatoes and that year the Aroostook potato crop was large and prices high. Incidentally, and importantly, we were the first show into that far northern territory that season. The potato growers came from miles around to see us.

"So called 'end of the line' towns are often good for circuses. Timmins and North Cobalt, Ontario mining or frontier towns, have been 'repeated on' by me successfully. But after I have showed in each town one day I've had to jump back to Sudbury and civilization, a matter of 336 miles. That was a Sunday jump which allowed us to stop and unload the train and feed the horses and humans

Stock cars just prior to being unloaded at an unknown location in 1927. Pfening Archives.





Midway at beautiful Eastport, Maine, July 30, 1927. A good crowd has gathered to hear the side show band. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.

en route without losing any precious exhibition days. Time is the essence of the contract in circusing. The long and heavy circus train, carrying its capacity, rarely averages more than twenty miles an hour. Hence, as it is loaded and ready to move about 1:00 a.m. and should be in the next town ready to unload at 6:00 a.m. one hundred miles for one night's haul is about all a railroad circus man can safely figure on.

"That is why, when it is necessary to make long jumps, either through an unprofitable territory into new territory or to get into some town ahead of some other show, the long jumps are generally made on Sunday. I made one Sunday jump of 344 miles July, 1926, between Fredericton, New Brunswick, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, and didn't get into Halifax until nearly dark that night. Halifax is noted for many things, among them lot lice and strict observance of the Sabbath. Lot lice are, as you might guess, towners or other outsiders who hang around a circus lot, get in circus peoples' way and do not—most emphatically do not—spend any money on the show.

"There were so many lot lice that summer evening in Halifax that I had to engage local policemen to keep the towners from being hit by center poles. I'm sure there were 20,000 of them on the lot, so thick that my six and eight horse drivers had trouble getting through without crippling them. I was doing

my best to hurry things along, and have the menagerie and big-top pitched before dark when I noticed the wagons were no longer coming from the unloading runs. I hopped into a taxi and beat it to the train where I found two local coppers on the job.

"What's up," I asked my trainmaster, getting him to one side.

"These Nova Scotia coppers," he whispered, 'say that according to local laws we must stop work—until after church is out.'

"What time is church out?" I demanded.

"Eight-thirty," he replied.

"I looked at my watch. It said 8:10. 'I think my watch is slow,' I said. Then I walked toward the guardians of the law and made speech with them.

"Nothing more moves until thirty minutes after eight," they announced.

"That's all right, officers," I assured them cordially. 'It is just 8:30 now.' And, believe me, that's what it was. My watch had gained that much while I walked thirty feet. So the unloading continued effectively. And—all praise to Halifax—so many towners came to the show that we turned a good profit on what I had regarded as a doubtful two-day stand.

"Even with a twenty-car, three-ringed circus a trouper sometimes works off the 'nut' or daily overhead in towns you never hear of normally. The circus general agent discovers them. One

Workingmen playing craps in the back yard in 1927. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.



of my general agents discovered in 1926 the town of Chicoutimi, Quebec. It is an aluminum town, that is, a big aluminum plant is going into action there. We jumped 228 miles to make that town and got a dollar a head on the front door. It was a fresh town sure enough. You never saw folks so circus hungry. I'm going to move my \$300,000 factory up there again someday.

"Usually after showing the early southern cities, the coal fields of West Virginia and—if the miners haven't been on strike too long—the hard coal fields of Pennsylvania; and making the eastern factory centers and the odds and ends of towns I have hinted at, and after showing the Middle Western territory, we begin to figure on the southern towns. The new textile region in the Carolina Piedmont is the favorite with several shows. I made it early one September, profitably, although I was in a little ahead of time. Late September would have been better for me. For some reason, which I have not analyzed, those mill hands are better circus fans late in that month. But it was the cotton country that knocked the profits out of several circuses that season.

"Ordinarily cotton is king to circusmen. We generally hit the lower Mississippi Valley and Alabama and Georgia in early October, sometimes before, and play it several money-making weeks. I showed towns like Charleston and Belzoni, Mississippi, having a population of about 2,000, for ten days in October of 1925, one day in each town, all close together and all turnaways. Cotton was plentiful and high. The darky cotton pickers had money to spend and spent it liberally. Alabama and Georgia were almost as good.

"The next fall was quite a different story to us circusmen. With a bumper crop cotton prices fell below the cost of production. Cotton picking stopped. That knocked the bottom out of the circus business. By running into Florida for nine days I managed to stay out of winter quarters until late in November, but I know one rival show that lost \$100,000 in that cotton country and another one that jumped a thousand miles to get away from it. I lost some good stands in Florida, too. Mine is the only major circus hauled by the East Coast Railway during the early winter season. In November, 1925, I had a tremendous business in Miami, West Palm Beach and neighboring towns. But I didn't get to them in 1926. The tropical hurricane shut me out of them. Nature changes many a route for circusmen. Most of us avoided the flooded portions of the lower Mississippi Valley during the fall of 1927.

"You may think that because we are people somehow set apart—commercial gypsies, so to speak—that we get along in peace and harmony. That, I'm sorry to tell you, is far from the truth. Circusmen not only battle with trade conditions and the elements, they also battle with each other viciously. Two rival circuses tried to squeeze me, once. It was a 'big squeeze' to use the circus lingo. These two rivals operated under one ownership. They decided to break me

when we were going south. My railroad hauls through the Carolinas and Georgia had been contracted for.

"In the old days it was possible to have such a pull with a particular railway that you could get an exclusive contract with it—a 'shut-out contract' as we'd say. Or, if you couldn't shut your rivals off the road your friend, the general freight agent, wouldn't tip off your towns and dates. The Interstate Commerce Commission changed that some years ago so that as soon as you contract for hauls over any road your rivals can find where you will be on any particular day. Hence when the 'big squeeze' was decided on, my two rivals had no trouble spotting me.

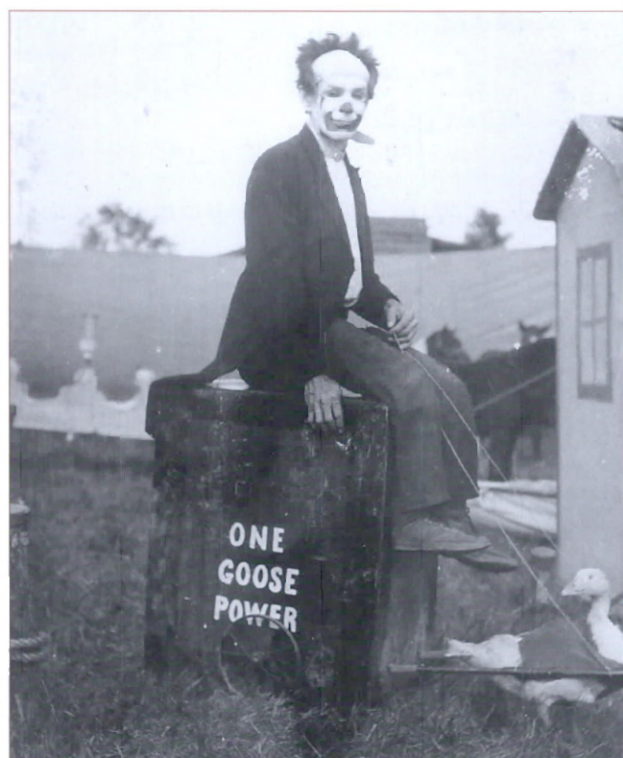
"One of the rival shows arranged to appear in half my towns either on the same day—'day-and-date' we say in circusdom—or the day before I was to exhibit in those towns. The other rival tented institution arranged to appear in the other towns, either day-and-date or one day behind me. You get the idea. In every town where I was billed on that long opposition route the rival either bid for business on the day I pitched my tents or, through billboards and newspapers and in other ways begged the towners to 'Wait For The Big Show' or tried to show first and thus get first money away from me.

"What did I do? I ran from there. I don't mind close-up opposition now and then but each of my rivals was fighting me only every other day while, if I'd stuck to my original route, I'd have been fighting one of them every day. Competition may be the life of trade, but I've seen many an amusement factory killed by it. So I cancelled several dates and jumped my factory four hundred miles into open territory. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day. I get opposition, normally about two days out of six. That's enough to satisfy me. There are plenty of ways to lose money in the circus game. Even the best of us make mistakes in choosing territory.

"My regular territory is from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. During the past quarter century I have travelled it so thoroughly that there are few good show towns within its limits where my title isn't a money getter. But during the season of 1925 I got an Alexander bee in my bonnet and began to yearn for other worlds. I figured that I had showed old towns so often that the towners knew even my horses by their first names.

"So I played an early July week in the wheat fields of Minnesota. The crops were poor but labor scarce, so the farmers came in to town—not to see my show but to abduct and make into high-priced harvest hands most of my roughnecks, razorbacks and hostlers. In September I invaded Oklahoma. Not only was I too early there. Opposition shows which were well established in that territory billed against me—put up 'Coming Soon,' 'Wait For the Big Show' and other paper, mostly covering what I'd posted. I beat it out of there.

"But I'm not complaining. I made up my losses before the season



Sparks clown Paul Wenzel in 1927 with his gag cart pulled by a goose. Wenzel was also in charge of the clown band. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.

closed and for a fellow who's earned his living since he was seven, singing and dancing on streets and in tents and doing trapeze work and acrobatics in the ring and never having any education I haven't come out so badly in the game. And I think I could prove to almost any town that it takes sharp wits and tireless energy to pilot a circus from town to town, to build and tear down your factory and to sell your merchandise as you go along. I've certainly taken some desperate chances and, at various times, exercised diplomacy.

"Years ago my show pulled into a southern town called Sullivan Hollow. As a town it was a hollow mockery because the Sullivans frequently shot it up. Now the Sullivans were not bad fellows. Their chief weakness was a tendency to fight among themselves. But when they got to battling in a big-top it made bad business for us circusmen.

"My general agent had warned me about Sullivan Hollow. 'If nothing breaks, we'll do business there. But look out for the clan boss, Old Man Sullivan,' he wrote me. 'The Old Man's apt to start anything.'

"I studied this letter while we were unloading. The little town was filling up with farmers from all sides. I figured that we would clean up on the day's business if the Sullivans didn't get to mixing it. Finally I concluded to anticipate trouble. I found where the Old Man lived and, mounting one of my horses, wandered out that way. About three miles along the dirt road I met a very bearded but gentlemanly individual.

"I'm looking for Colonel Sullivan's plantation, sir,' I informed the incoming equestrian.

"Ah'm Con'l Sullivan, sah,' he replied.

"As usual when I needed help it came from an unexpected source.

"Colonel Sullivan, sir,' I began on him. 'The folks back in yonder Hollow tell me we're apt to have trouble on account of circus day. Some roughs from the backlands are coming in to start something, so the town folks say. Now I'm the owner of Sparks Circus. My show is strong for law and order. We want a man of authority to help us maintain it, especially on account of our lady patrons. Can you tell where I will find such a leading person?'

"The old gentleman straightened his shoulders and pawed his

whiskers. 'Guess Ah'm the pe'son you'ah all lookin' foh,' he said.

"I hired him on the spot as my own guardian. He took charge of our circus in Sullivan Hollow. He was armed with a shotgun and rare courage and as he appeared at our big top he announced quite casually, 'Am an officer of law an' ordah an' nothin's goin' to happen on this heah show to distu'b its peace and dignity, noh to annoy the ladies congregated heah.'

"I will say for Colonel Sullivan that he made his promise good to all of us. But if I'd been mistaken in my individual? I don't often make mistakes like that. Every year I'm in contact with about a million individuals, most of them my customers, and I know that, with very rare exceptions, they favor having everything on the level for everyone. The few who try to get the best of me are misguided or are just exceptions to the rule.

"They come, these children of all ages, to be amused by my offerings. The more innocent the amusement the more it appeals to them. I have been able to climb from nothing because I've always sold honest merchandise and won't stand for anything off color, anywhere. In the language of the circus lots, my show is 'Sunday school.'

"My people know that all I ask is straight living and unfailing loyalty and a willingness to work as hard as I do to keep the factory functioning. That's all I'd ask of anyone. At any rate, with their cooperation, I've moved my factory five thousand times since 1903 without missing a detail of its operation. By being on the job from dawn to midnight I've amassed enough money to retire, if I want to, but I don't intend to quit because I've formed the habit of getting the best of all difficulties. Still—I nurse one great ambition.

"Some say I lack executive ability because I'm with the show in all kinds of towns and weather; that I should go abroad, like other efficient business men, and let my organization carry on. That idea so appeals to me that I'd like to turn my circus over to such an efficient stationary factory owner that—following the example set in other lines—he'd leave the show for gay Paree allowing his assistants to run the show.

"That wouldn't be so difficult if the circus could remain stationary but in America there are no permanent circuses. They must move from town to town. Mind you, it doesn't require a business genius to run a circus on the lot. Physical endurance, courage, resource and ingenuity will accomplish that. But if my successor attempted to hire someone to route his travelling amusement factory it would fail before he could get back to it.

"You have to get the business or go into bankruptcy in the circus game and the only way to get the business is to load your circus on a railroad train and personally go after it." BW

A troupier in his youth, Earl Chapin May (1873-1960) wrote The Circus From Rome to Ringling, the first general history of the American circus, in 1932. He was also the author of numerous magazine articles on the circus. He published books on many other subjects including histories of the canning industry and New England silversmiths.

Sparks parade in Augusta, Maine, August 4, 1927. Eddie Jackson photo, Pfening Archives.



Augusta Maine

Aspects of the Circus Business

in the 1880s from *The Sun*

The *Sun*, published in New York City, covered the American circus industry in greater detail than any other contemporary daily newspaper. The three following pieces were all feature articles in the paper, each fleshing out a facet of the business of which the general public had little knowledge. The *Sun* is a rich and largely untapped source for the nineteenth century circus, so extensive in fact, that an anthology of its circus reportage would be a useful addition to field show scholarship. It is available at the Library of Congress website as part of the *Chronicling America* project which has placed hundreds of thousands of newspapers online.

The first piece is a tour of the new Barnum and London Circus winter quarters, conducted by James L. Hutchinson, one of the company's principals. A general discussion about the leasing of privileges follows. The last selection is an account of the circus advance. All offer insights into the circus of the 1880s.

A Menagerie in Winter

How Pleasantly the Beasts Dwell Together on a Connecticut Farm

Elephants, Elks, and Zebras as Beasts of Burden—Training the Horses and Building Pyramids of Elephants—The 900 Pound Baby that Imitates its Elders—The Season of 1881.

Elephants pushing long and heavily laden cars on diverging side tracks, and dragging chariots through the mud; zebras in harness working alongside piebald horses; elks as beasts of burden drawing like oxen—such have been some of the curious sights of which travelers on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad have caught passing glimpses recently as the trains from New York neared Bridgeport. Conductors whose experience goes back a quarter of a century were once astonished at such spectacles, but ever since they saw P. T. Barnum plowing with an elephant in the fields where the side tracks run, they have ceased to wonder at anything [for] long. Some of them had a new sensation a few days ago, however, when they saw the sign of the Great London Circus painted on the top of one of the Barnum's big show buildings. It was then that they first learned that the Lion and the Lamb had lain down together—that the two great shows were thenceforth to travel under one canvas, and were to stay together in winter quarters.

There was no particular ceremony over the union. The Great London Circus closed a season of remarkable prosperity in Washington, D. C., on the 30th of October. On the 2nd of November the long circus train rolled into

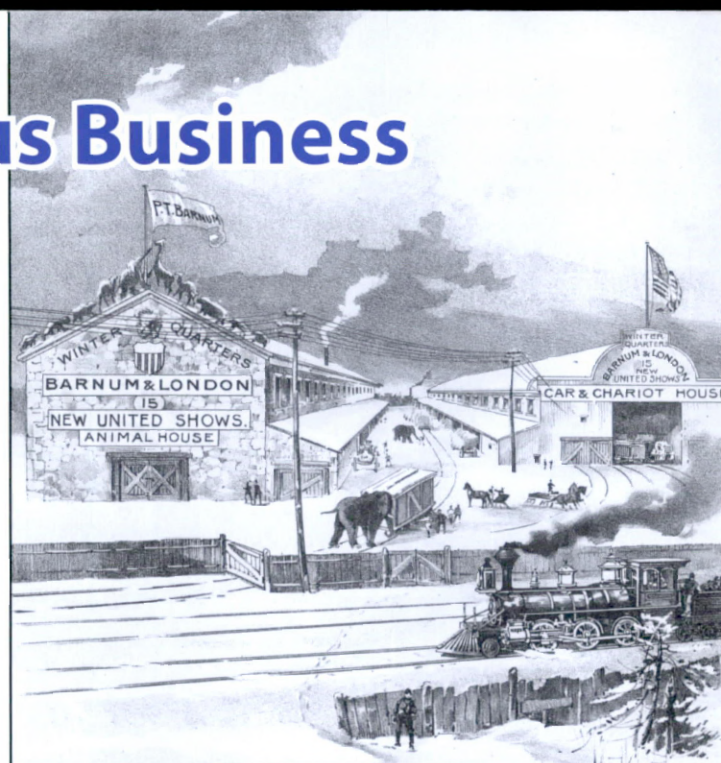


Illustration of Barnum and London winter quarters from the book *P. T. Barnum's Circus*, a children's book published in 1888. Use with permission from Illinois State University's Special Collections, Milner Library.

Barnum's show headquarters in Bridgeport, and the show material was stowed away in the ample buildings prepared for the two shows.

Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth was overtaken by bad weather in Washington, Mo., on the 6th of November, and abruptly terminated its season there and started homeward. One week from that day the employees of the London were welcoming their brethren of Barnum's at their quarters. The animal cages were arrayed side by side, the trained horses of the two circuses were placed in contiguous stalls, the surplus work horses were bunched together and sent to farmers in the neighboring country, thy golden chariots were housed under a single roof; and the clowns and ring masters, acrobats and fat men, giants, and lightning calculators, Albinos and Fijis, and other professionals whose season of profit and usefulness had ended, vanished as mysteriously as they will come out again when the next show year commences.

Behind the Scenes

"The most interesting part of a show is the part that the public never sees," said Mr. James L.

Hutchinson, one of the proprietors of the combined shows, yesterday. "Drive over with me to the winter quarters and take a stroll through. I think you will agree with me."

After a drive of a mile and a half, the carriage stopped at



THE SECOND BABY-ELEPHANT EVER BORN IN CAPTIVITY, AT BRIDGEPORT, AT THE WINTER QUARTERS, FEB. 2ND 1882, WEIGHED 145 POUNDS, HEIGHT 30 INCHES & LENGTH 36. TRUNK & TAIL EACH 7 INCHES. PERIOD OF GESTATION ABOUT 20 MONTHS, STOOD ON ITS FEET IN 30 MINUTES & NURSED THE MOTHER'S BREASTS IN 2 HOURS.

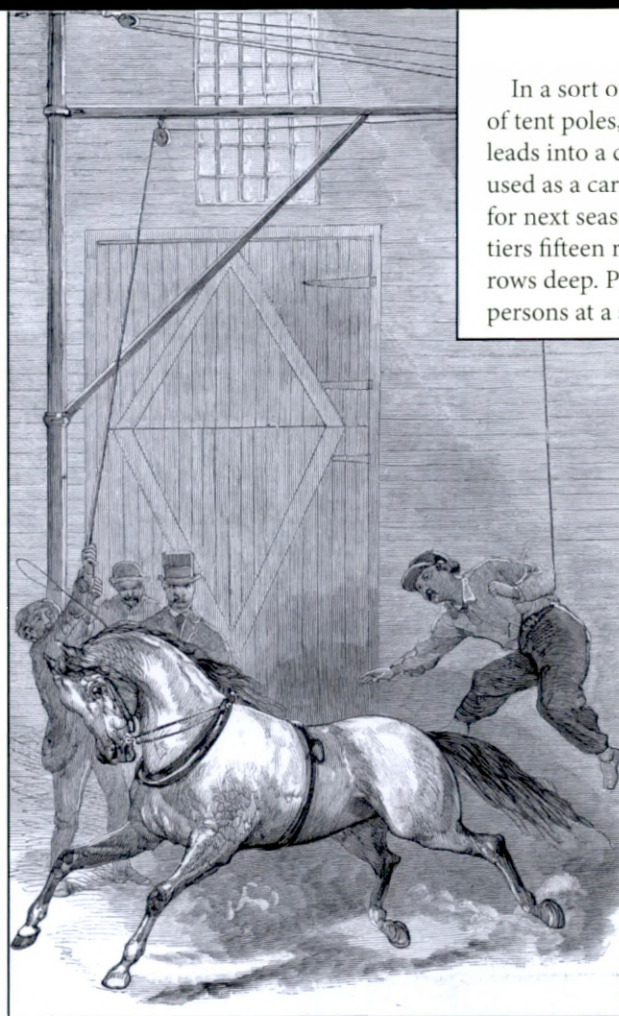
the doorway of a substantial frame building that formed one of the outworks of a five-acre enclosure. A tight board fence surrounds the lot, and within the boundaries stand six buildings, so situated as to leave a quadrangular space between them. The lot borders on the New Haven Railroad track, and the hundred cars of the shows are switched off on to six side tracks, and are pushed under the lone frame sheds.

"The ring barn," said Mr. Hutchinson, opening the door of the long building at which the company had alighted. The ring barn is a compartment eighty feet square, with stalls for thirty-six horses on three sides of it. In the corners of the other side are two dressing rooms. In the center there is a ring forty-four feet in diameter, of the ordinary circus pattern. The floor of the ring is of earth, and the wooden rim around it is carefully padded to prevent injury to the practicing riders. Mr. R. Dockrill, equestrian director of the combined shows, had completed his morning work of training the new performing horses for next season, but he illustrated the manner in which the riders practiced. From the center of the ring rose a structure

something like a derrick. It consisted of an upright beam, with a horizontal timber extending out from the top. The horizontal piece revolved on a pivot. From the end furthest from the center pole a rope depended. At the end of the rope was a strap made into a loop. The rope worked on a pulley and was raised or lowered by a man standing at the center of the ring. When the candidate for equestrian honors mounted his barebacked steed (no pad riders are allowed in the show), the strap was fastened around his body. The man at the center pushed the horizontal piece around as fast as the man rode, and thus kept the rope continually attached to him. If the horse stumbled or the rider lost his balance the man at the center pulled quickly on the end of the rope and in an instant the rider was dangling in mid-air, like a spider, while the horse went galloping on.

Madam Elise Dockrill's six trained horses, whose glossy coats give evidence of careful attendance, stand in the stalls. They are exercised almost every day in the arena to keep them from forgetting their education. Mr. Dockrill has them in charge. The madam is spending the winter in her beautiful home in Fordham, where she enjoys all the comforts that her accumulations from a salary of \$1000 a week will bring to her. Ten days practice before the show starts in the spring is all that she requires.

The Trakene stallions: Sanchikoff, the wonderful horse that leaps over the backs of five horses; the tableau-performing horse, and other equine wonders munch their oats in others stalls in this room. On the walls of the ring barn, as well as in the other buildings, conspicuous placards give warning that any man found smoking on the premises will be discharged, "By order of P. T. Barnum."



Rider using mechanic in practice at Barnum winter quarters. From Harper's Weekly, February 18, 1882.

In a sort of gallery above the stalls are great heaps of tent poles, stakes, &c. A staircase from the barn leads into a capacious room in the second story, used as a carpenter shop, where seats are being made for next season. The ordinary circus seats are in tiers fifteen rows deep. The new seats will be thirty rows deep. Preparations will be made to seat 15,000 persons at a single entertainment.

A sleeping apartment, where the bunks for thirty-two men are provided, is in the same story. The men are animal keepers and others whose constant presence is required in the buildings. In a loft above the second story 250 harness, oiled and in perfect order, are kept. Buckets filled with water and lines of hose, ready for use in case of fire, are all over this and the adjoining buildings.

Among the Animals

"Now, we'll take a look at the animals," said Mr. Hutchinson, leading the way down to the first story. He swung open the door leading from the ring barn into another compartment of the same dimensions. A current of warm air, heated to a temperature of 65 degrees, rushed out. The animals will spend the winter in that climate. On the asphalt pavement stood long rows of cages, not the painted one

of the tents, but plain, solid structures intended only for use in winter quarters. The cages stood on trucks, so that in case of fire they could be rushed through the double doors to a place of safety. Prof. Johnson, aided by eleven assistants, was in command of this department. The Professor was preparing a delicate dish of toast and broth for the monkeys in one corner of the room, and near him stood a steaming kettle of cooked meat for some of the carnivorous animals. The Professor's pets in the sixty cages eat 250 pounds of meat, four bushels of potatoes, and four of carrots in a day, besides pumpkins, cabbage, and various other articles in considerable quantities. The sleekness, fatness, and high spirits of the beasts and birds bear testimony to the quantity and quality of their diet. Perhaps, however, the selection of the best animals only out of the two collections makes the average higher.

"You see," said Mr. Hutchinson, "that it was a question of the survival of the fittest. When the two menageries got together we had duplicates, triplicates, sometimes half a dozen specimens of nearly every species. We went to work to weed them out, with the determination of taking the best from the two collections. The keepers in the two shows took check lists of all the animals and went around together to pass on the good and weak points of each. Age, sex, size, beauty, docility, &c. were considered. Perhaps a Barnum leopard had a longer tail than a London leopard; the Barnum beast was chosen. Or a Barnum tiger had a piece of an ear gone, while the auricular machinery of a London tiger was perfect; in that case the London cat got the cake. Lions' manes, hyenas' teeth, zebras' stripes, monkeys' constitutions, and all those other

fine points were critically compared by our experts. The result is a menagerie without a bad looking animal in it, unless you object to the peculiar style of beauty of the wart hog or the horned horse in whose two cages over there. We shall sell off animals where we have too many of a kind, but we shall always keep duplicates of every variety on hand to draw upon in case of death or accident. We have just sent \$20,000 worth of animals as a loan to the Central Park menagerie. Our own keepers are there taking care of them."

A Romance of Boston

The visitor stopped before a cage containing an African lion, a splendid specimen of his kind. "That lion was raised from a cub by a Boston lady," Mr. Hutchinson explained. "When it was a little fellow she had no trouble with it. But he grew to large size, and although he was as gentle as a kitten the neighbors became afraid of him. The lady was devotedly attached to him, and could not be induced to part with him. Finally the neighbors carried the matter before the City Council and got a special act passed that compelled her to give up her pet. So she sent him to us, although it almost broke her heart. Do you know that woman followed the show for weeks in different parts of the East to see that lion? He would recognize her anywhere in a crowd, and would bound around his cage and roar with delight when she came up."

Near neighbors of the lion are four royal Bengal tigers in one cage. Alfred Still, their tamer, is always near them, and no other hand ever gives them food. It is by being with them at all times and feeding them that he keeps his mastery over the brutes. As he approaches the cage, three of the animals crouch down and give low growls of friendly recognition. The fourth draws back and snarls and his eyes flash fire. "That's a bad tiger," says Still, as he seizes a long iron rod and punches the brute into a corner; "you can't trust him." Nevertheless, still goes into the cage every day, fires a gun over the tigers' heads, and does other apparently dangerous things. Madam Still visits the room every day to feed a den of South American pumas, with which she also performs, to keep them in subjection till next summer.

Here is the Albino deer, pure white, a singular freak of nature. A New Orleans gentleman sent it as a present to Barnum. It came in a slat-covered box one day, unannounced, with \$60 express charges on it. "Good gracious," said the old showman, "I shan't pay any such charges as that." But he did, and the deer is one of the most valuable animals of the show. There is an eland; next to it an ibex; here is a llama; behind them a cage of black leopards, and next to them the baby kangaroos. Dozing in that corner is the biggest rhinoceros in the world, and opposite him is the two-horned rhinoceros, as untamable a beast as there is in the room. Workmen are engaged in putting an extra iron bar around his cage at the point where he strains the rods most in his dashes. Mr. Hutchinson leads the way down long aisles lined with cages containing tapirs and yaks and wildcats and deer and monkeys and rare birds, pausing to point out a curious

black nondescript in the corner—a cross between a coach dog and a prairie wolf—and rapped with his cane on a door that he could not pull open. "They are training an elephant," he said, in explanation of the barred passage way. An attendant unbarred the door.

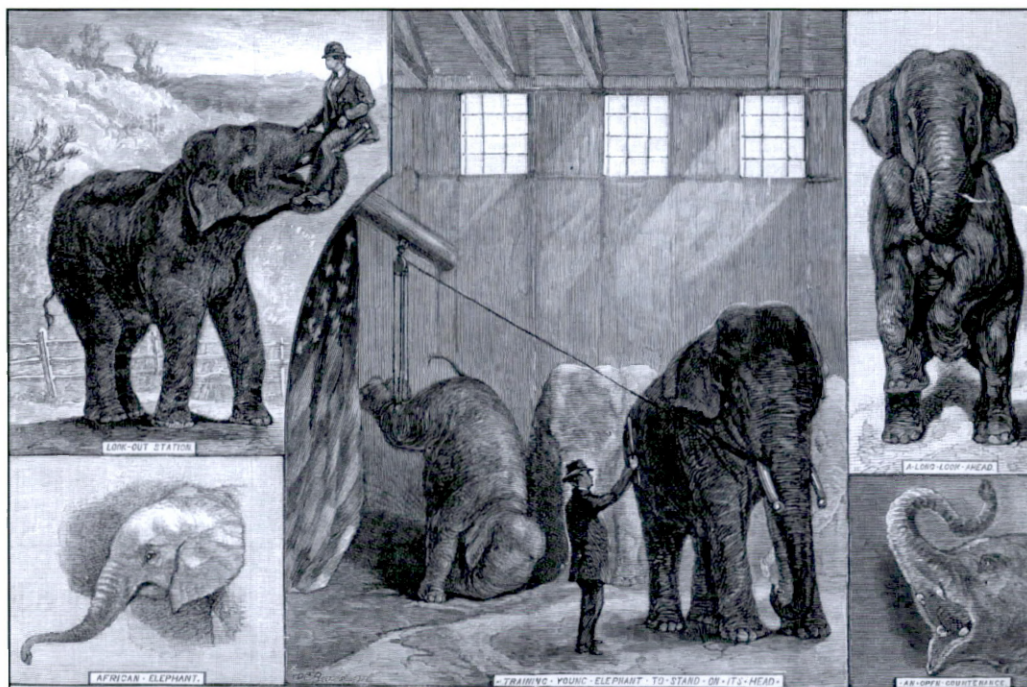
The Elephant Room

The room is eighty feet square and has a circus in the center like the horse-training barn. A man stood in the center of the ring holding the end of a rope. At the other end of the rope was a small elephant reluctantly shuffling around the ring under the steering of a keeper, who pushed at his head, and the prodding of two other keepers at his flanks. Ranged around the room were seventeen other elephants in that peculiar attitude of elephantine listlessness that show visitors are familiar with. One of them had evidently been at rehearsal a short time before, for he was experimenting all by himself with his fore feet on one of those tubs on which performing elephants stand. It is a peculiarity of these sagacious beasts that they keep practicing, outside of business hours, whatever tricks their keepers are trying to teach them. Against the wall stood a movable framework resembling a horse's stall. Beside it stood several tubs, such as elephants stand on.

"We are getting up a new way of forming a pyramid of elephants," a keeper said. "The old way was to let the elephants stand with their hind feet on the small tubs, and put their fore feet on a high tub in the center. Next season we are going to put one of the elephants in place of the center tub, and let the others put their feet on his back. In breaking in the middle elephant we put him in that frame work where he can't move. When he gets used to it we will take away the frame.

"Now, Mr. Arstingstall, show us the baby," said Mr. Hutchinson to the head keeper. The keeper stepped to a fenced-off portion of the room, and let down two of the four bars. Before he could drop the other two a big leg was thrust over the top, then another. Then a short, chunky body followed half way and stuck fast. There seemed to be another heavy pair of legs dangling on the other side of the

Elephants in Barnum's winter quarters. Center illustration shows block and tackle being used to train an elephant to stand on its head. From Harper's Weekly, February 18, 1882.



bars. There was a short season of wriggling; then the rear portion of the body went up and the fore part went down. There was a final plunge and there stood revealed "America," the only baby elephant ever born in captivity; nine months old, there and a half feet high, 900 pounds in weight, frisky as a spring calf, and clumsier than a Newfoundland pup. Here, the proud and only elephant mother, started to follow, in order keep her eye on her babe, but the keeper ordered her back. The baby thought she would go back, too, and over she went with a reckless tumble. That was so easy that she decided to get over again right away and she floundered out sideways. She repeated this great feat with keen relish at least a dozen times in as many minutes. Next she mounted the rim of the circus ring, and fell off before she had walked her length. Then she spied a tube, and stepped up on its bottom as she had seen the other elephants do. She jumped off as soon as she got on to follow a man who was carrying a pail of water. When the man shut the door on her, she came back and dodged around under the other elephants who were watching her antics, and finally she got spanked with a big board to make her hasten her return to the pen again.

America still nurses, and her mother never lets her go out alone if she can help it, though the other female elephants caress and fondle her, and would not see her hurt for the world. By the time she is weaned Hebe's proud distinction threatens to be lost, and Queen, another of the fine London show elephants, promises to usurp her place in the public eye.

Besides the eighteen elephants in the winter quarters there are four dwarf woolly ones now on their way thither from Europe. There of the Central Park elephants also belong to the show, making a total of twenty-five. Mr. Arstingstall has five experienced keepers assisting him in caring for the elephants. The animals are never left by themselves for a moment, night or day. Two men sleep in the room every night. The elephants eat 2000 pounds of hay per day, besides eight bushels of oats and corn and four bushels of carrots.

"You see you'll have to come again," said Mr. Hutchinson, as he swung open the double storm doors into the quadrangle. "We can't get all around in half a day, but we'll just look into the other buildings and you'll have a sort of panorama as it were."

Here is the panorama: A great stable full of work horses; lofts where hay, 100 tons at a time, is stowed away; big cellars, in which cabbage and carrots were being dumped by the car load; a harness repair shop in full blast; a great room filled with chariots; another loft to which cages and wagons were being hoisted to be varnished; a great storeroom filled with mattresses and pillows and blankets; another full of paste kettles and brushes and cuts and electrotypes; car stables so long that it would almost tire a man to walk the length of them and back again; and finally, after long climbs up stairs and down stairs, into attics and cellars, a seat in a cozy office, where you can sit and talk by telephone with men in any part of the half dozen buildings, or touch an electric signal that will bring the entire Bridgeport Fire Department to the spot. Here visiting showmen who desire to purchase stock, and other who have business with the company, are received. Here the familiar form of Henry Bergh, who had come to see that there was no cruelty practiced to the training animals, was seen on Friday and Chang, the giant, also dropped in to see the people with whom he is to travel.

Getting Ready for 1881

But the Bridgeport winter quarters is not the only place where the drill and preparation are going on for the coming season. At the company office, 7 West Third Street, this city [New York], Mr.

Hutchinson is attending to a vast volume of correspondence and engaging novelties and curiosities. Mr. James A. Bailey, the general manager is continually on flying trips to Cincinnati, Buffalo, Philadelphia and elsewhere, looking after \$100,000 contracts for a season's poster printings and making other business arrangements; three or four men are in foreign countries securing new animals and other curiosities; in Thirty-fourth Street twenty women are sewing on elephant robes, camel covers, blankets and other fabrics that every well-regulated show requires. Gymnasts are practicing in private quarters here and in Bridgeport (those in the latter place going occasionally to the winter quarters to perform in the ring).

Early in March the cars of the combined shows, resplendent in canary-colored paint, will be turned out of the New Haven repair shops, and will bring the shows to this city for the first exhibition, which will be preceded by a night parade a mile long that will out-Barnum Barnum. After a short season the shows will move eastward through all the large towns. A town of less than 15,000 inhabitants is too small for a paying business, for it takes 7000 admissions, or \$3500 a day, to pay the expenses of the combined shows.

When the union of the London and Barnum's was first effected it was designed to send one show to Europe and have the other travel in this country. But that plan will not be followed until the two shows have tried the experiment of keeping together. The menageries of the two companies are merged in one. The circuses will be kept distinct, but everything is to be included in a single exhibition. Whether to have the animal tent in the center, with the London circus at one end and the Barnum circus at the other, in different tents, or to have three rings for the circus performers under one tent, are details that have not been decided upon as yet. If, when Boston is reached it is found that the combined shows cannot travel together at good advantage, the London will be detached and sent to Europe, under the name of Barnum's American Show, and the other show, bearing the name of the separate companies that compose it, will travel through the United States.

Mr. Barnum expects to travel with the combination, as usual, but will leave the details to Mr. Bailey, the general manager and to Mr. Hutchinson, his partners. Mr. Barnum's partners were both with the London show. They are young men, under 35, and almost grew up in the business. Mr. Bailey was a show bill poster, and Mr. Hutchinson started in life as a driver of a circus wagon at \$13 a month. *The Sun*, New York City, December 19, 1880.

Circus Privileges

What They Are, Their Worth, and the Language in Which They are Talked About

In offering his services to managers for the approaching tenting season, a circus man describes himself in an advertisement as "a good square hustler," and furthermore affirms that he "never had a superior as general fixer, particularly street and licenses; thorough handler of all privileges." In some inexplicable way the men of the sawdust arena have made unto themselves a language peculiar and to a very great degree unintelligible to the uninitiated. Much of it undoubtedly comes from gypsy sources, was talked generations ago among the horse riders of England, and was imported to this country by the Cookes and other old circus families. Here fertile imaginations have enlarged and enriched it with newly-coined words, idiomatic phrases, and slang, until it is almost as copious and queer as the "thieves' patter" of London, with which, by the way, it has much in common. Those by whom it is most commonly



Bowman and Young had the sideshow privilege on the Sells and Rentfrow Circus when this picture was taken on September 9, 1892 at Aberdeen, South Dakota. Note minstrel band in front of banner line. Pfening Archives.

used are the canvasmen, hostlers, grooms, ring supernumeraries, and other members of what may be classed as the humbler divisions in the circus army. The aristocrats of the ring—[William] Dutton, [Charles] Fish, [James] Melville, [James] Robinson and others—are seldom heard using it outside of the profession, and, except in dealing with their subordinates, hardly ever is a word of it allowed to pass the lips of proprietors like James. A. Bailey or P. T. Barnum. But it is absolutely necessary for them all to know that language in order to hold easy and clearly understood necessary converse with the majority of minor circus employees, many of whom would have exceedingly limited vocabularies were their peculiar “patter” eliminated from their stock of words.

Those who habitually use this speech not infrequently find a serious value in the power it gives them of exchanging ideas, purposes and warnings in [the] presence of “outsiders” who may be hostile to them, without being understood by others than their comrades. In fact, it answers from them most of the uses of a foreign tongue, and they employ it at times without a thought of its comic incongruity in the gravest situations.

Several years ago a circus company left behind in Chicago a sick canvas man. The poor fellow was not likely to recover, and the best they could do for him was to put him in a room of the Mattison House and make liberal provision for his care until the end should come. Another canvas man, one of his oldest and dearest friends, remained behind to attend him. After a few days of pain, nature began to give way. Beside the bed sat his friend, a big rough, but warm-hearted fellow, over whose bronzed cheeks tears of grief were flowing fast, who looked up at the minister who had been called and said in a choking voice: “Stag his goggles, he’s a goin’.” (See his eyes, he is going.)

It is related that one time a circus showing in a little Ohio town suddenly lost one of its canvasmen. After the canvas was up and before time for striking it he wandered off about the town. A revival meeting in a little church attracted him. He listened to a thrilling exhortation, felt himself a great sinner, seated himself among the mourners, and “got religion” before the evening ended. The show went on and left him, but the treasurer sent back to him the wages due on his account. He settled down in the town, became a member of the church, found plenty of profitable employment as a carpenter, and lived an irreproachable life, but never could get rid of his old habits of speech, except the swearing, which he left off entirely. Three or four years went by during which no circus visited that town. Then one came, and in its train of employees was a

canvas man who had formerly been the convert’s closet “pard.” The unregenerate newcomer chanced to meet his old friend and saluted him with a profane explosion of exuberant joy, to which the other, while warmly grasping his hand, replied, pointing up to heaven: “Silence, cully; stow your cackle. His Nibs hears you.” Never was an admonition against profanity more earnestly meant, but the mode of its expression might, in the ears of the hypercritical have seemed mar its solemnity. He meant simply: “Silence, comrade; restrain your words. God hears you.”

But this is a digression suggested by that word “hustler,” which an old circus man says means “a good lively industrious worker,” nothing more. The “general fixer’s” business is the getting of licenses for showing in towns and cities, and obtaining permits for street parades. An experienced, capable man, agreeable and smart, can save a good many dollars to a show in the course of a season in doing that work by making tickets as good as money to petty officials; and occasionally, in some rough Western localities, the tact and good nature of a “fixer” have been of almost inestimable value in making friends ahead of the show. “Fixer” is a shorter word than negotiator, and, for all practical circus purposes, is as good. That referenced to the handling of privileges touches a wider and more important ground. The word “privileges,” when used in circus associations, is meant to include all the various devices for capturing money in and about a circus other than the “big show” itself.

Four of these are legitimate, and acknowledged—side show, concert, candy, and tickets. It is affirmed, and apparently on good circus authority that one show, not many seasons ago, leased out the privilege of passing counterfeit money to the “yokels” or countrymen along its route and that another leased the “clothes line privilege,” or [the] right to petty sneak thieving of all sorts on its line of march. Strictly speaking, there was not in either case a formal leasing of either privilege, but that which amounted to the same thing was that the counterfeiters and thieves were personally known to the managers of two shows, and had to pay them liberally for permission to “work” the crowds attracted by the circuses and the country round about.

The “side show privilege” covers the right to exhibit in a tent adjoining that of the big show, any and all sorts of alleged attractions and supposed monstrosities, with the inseparable adjunct of real monstrosities of paintings outside, to amaze and fascinate rural beholders. The license granted to a circus ordinarily covers all its belongings, including the side show; and the running



In the nineteenth century concessions were often leased out privileges by circuses. The candy stand on Ringling Bros. in the late 1890s is shown here. Circus World Museum Collection.

expenses of the latter are very small by comparison with the big show, so that the profits upon this privilege in proportion to investment, are often much greater than those of the circus itself. In some cases it has been known that where the circus lost money during a season the side show made handsome profits.

The "concert privilege" covers the variety show given in the main tent after the ring performance ends. Though this show has no license or advertising expenses—beyond such advertisements as given by bellowing fellows offering tickets for sale during the main performance—its outlay is sometimes heavy in its list of salaries for specialty performers, who are often high priced. It therefore is much less profitable proportionately than the side show but still is quite a handsome source of revenue with any good and successful circus.

The "candy privilege" covers the sale of confectionary, nuts, fruit, lemonade, &c., in the main tent.

The "ticket privilege" involves the right to sell daily, in advance of the opening of the ticket wagon, at a slight increase of price, a certain stipulated number of tickets to the main show. Thousands of people would rather pay an extra dime on each ticket than struggle in the crowd at the ticket wagon.

The show in this country that sells none of its privileges is that of Barnum, Bailey & Hutchinson, which derives from them from \$1500 to \$2000 a day through the season, and by entire ownership is enabled to keep them under much better control than if they were farmed out to others. Generally when the privileges are sold they all go together to an individual or a firm that appoints responsible men as managers of each of them. That is the sort of position that the "thorough handler of all privileges" is after. When bunched and sold in this way, the four privileges are worth from \$500 to \$50,000 for a season, according to the magnitude of the show with which they are associated. When separately leased their values vary very greatly according to a variety of correlative considerations. A "side show privilege" has been known to sell along for \$30,000 for the single season, with a large and popular circus, and a "ticket privilege" for the same length of time has brought \$7000. Sometimes circus managers who had good popular names, but were financially ruined by a disastrous season, have been put on their feet again pecuniary

and stared upon new eras of prosperity by the sales, in advance, of their privileges for a single season. Shows have been started entirely by the money paid for privileges, and several of the prominent circus managers of to-day were formerly handlers or leasees of privileges. *The Sun*, New York City, February 24, 1884.

In Advance of the Circus

How the Big Shows Warn the Country of Their Coming

Agents who are Always Busy—Methods of their Work and the Pay They Get—Flattering the Men of Influence in the Country.

"Young man," said a veteran circus agent to a *Sun* reporter the other day, "you're going to see the liveliest tenting season you ever witnessed. There won't be any blood spilled, but lots of money will change hands, and I guess some of the bucolics will have to economize after we get through with them. Tomorrow week I'm going to start out ahead of my show; that gives me just a month to get my work in on the first 'stand,' and it will be hard work, too. Oh, it's going to be blamed lively, there's no use talking.

"What's the use of starting out so far ahead of your company?" asked the reporter, who didn't know much about circus agents.

"Say, 'show,' young man, never 'company,' to a circus hustler. What the use of going out so early? Well, that's pretty good for a reporter. Don't you know that in the past four or five years the general advance, or preparatory work of a circus has come to be considered the most important factor in the success of the season? It's a fact, now."

Then the hoary-headed agent went on to tell how of late years the methods by which big circuses herald their approach had undergone considerable change, and were now thought to be in their most effective, expeditious and generally economical form. As the agent deftly sketched the various steps taken by the advance brigades of the more pretentious tent show, the reporter marveled that he had not sooner comprehended the vastness of those quick and unseen operations which circus manager now deem so important.

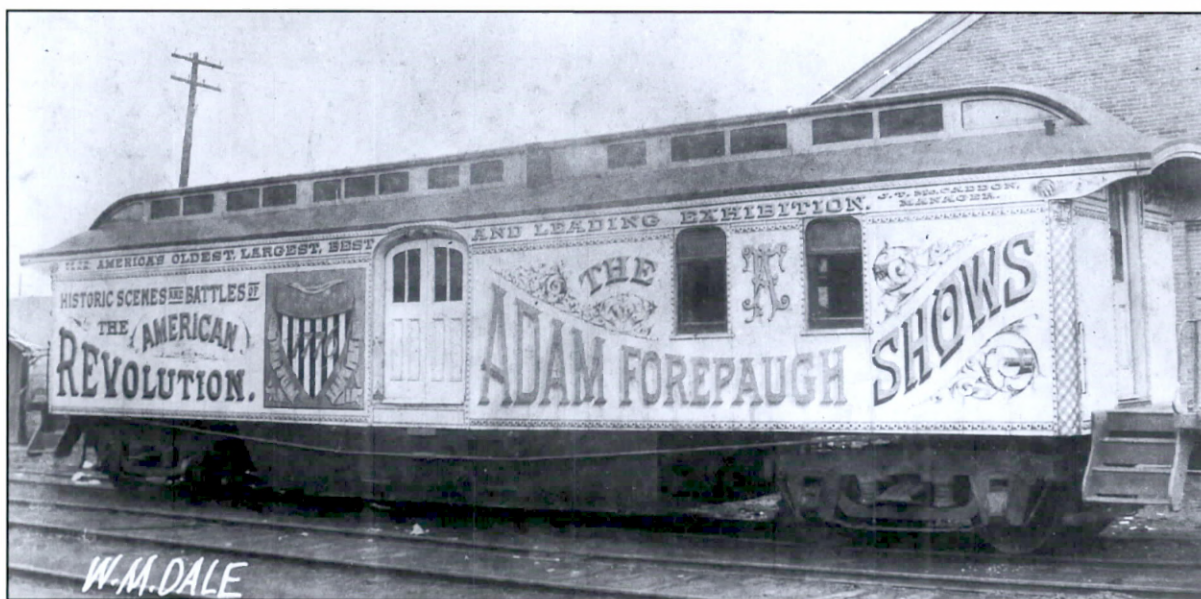
It is supposed, first, that the route through the country of any big circus has already been mapped out—an important duty invariably performed by the owners of the show, and one obviously requiring their wisest judgment and most temperate zeal. The town or city to be visited is as yet in ignorance of the gayety that threatens it; the local press may have had a warning or two, casually, and the bill poster, or he who owns the big billboards, is doubtless aware of the date, for his space has been contracted for, as it often happens, six months or a year ahead; but, speaking of the public generally, the circus is altogether unexpected.

Fully three weeks ahead of the date selected for the show's visit, a courier, called in circus parlance the contracting agent, makes his appearance in the town. He should be a diplomat in every sense of the word, and she should also be a sharp man at bargaining. First of all he is bound to secure the lot upon which the circus is to exhibit. This is not an easy commission. Ground rents are generally advanced when the contracting agent is observed on the still hunt. But he has to get there all the same, and be quick about it. That is

why such an agent is most valuable when he possesses energy, nerve, and accurate judgment. If he finds any difficulty in securing a lot in or near the heart of the city, he is invested by his employers with the power to act according to his discretion, and thus it often happens that the lot selected is quite a distance out of the city. However, when the bargain for its use is ratified, the agent feels that one big item in his calendar is checked off.

It is popularly supposed that about this time the agent goes and plays billiards for the next two weeks with his friend, the night clerk of the hotel. But he doesn't—probably because he hasn't time. While he has been hustling after the lot, he has also been looking up the license requirement, if, indeed, he did not already know it when he hit the city. His mind satisfied on that point, he takes out the license and pays for it. In course of time he may be able to discount the night clerk at the ivories, but that will hardly occur until he has made his contracts for billboards in and around the city; contracts for hire of teams for use as later explained; contracts for feeding the show's bill posters, who are to come along presently; contracts for supplying hay, meat and bread for the animals with the show, whenever it arrives, and finally—through this is sometimes arranged ahead of him—the contracts for the transportation of the show (it has its own cars) over the railroad. All these duties ought not to take more than two days, and then the agent will have to "move on," like that poor little boy in the story. And the night clerk, too, will not get a chance to play his best game for the agent's benefit.

At the same time, that clerk has probably had a narrow escape, for circus agents generally show good billiards. Perhaps he is not yet out of danger, for it is agreed that whatever work has been left unfinished by the contracting agent shall be by him turned over, with all the contracts already signed, to the next advance agent in order. This man quickly follows on the heels of his predecessor, and he comes over the railroad in advance car No. 1 of the show's property. With him are fifteen or twenty men, bill posters, programmers, and lithographers, and quick workers all of them. They sleep on the car and are early risers. At dawn, almost before the car gets into town, they are ready for their work, which, as it has to be completed in a day, must be done with haste. Before 6 o'clock their paste is prepared, their "paper" counted off into the required bundles, and their movements are outlined for their guidance. Arrived in the city, they eat a hasty breakfast at the hotel—the contracting agent has fixed that—and, dividing into groups, they take the teams previously arranged for by that same contracting agent. Frequently, within thirty minutes of the arrival of car No. 1, its score of workers are well distributed over the city and surrounding towns. Those who are assigned to do the country



In 1893 the Adam Forepaugh Circus used four advance advertising cars including this one booming the American Revolution spec. Pfening Archives.

billing make drives of from thirty to fifty miles a day; they cover as wide a radius, in fact, as they can, always managing to finish so as to join their car about dark.

Meanwhile, the force assigned to work in the city itself has had no time to spare, for there are thousands of "hangers" and lithographs to be placed in the windows, billboards to be covered, "couriers" to be directed to houses, shops, &c. Between 6 and 9 o'clock that night the various forces finish their work, dine and return to the car, which is attached to the first outgoing train that same evening, and before 10 o'clock all hands will be bowling away for the next "stand." Before he has left town the second agent, like the first, has submitted his report to the agent back of him. No. 2 swoops down upon the place a week or ten days later, bringing with him another gang of fifteen or twenty men, all bill posters &c., like those in car No. 1. It is the chief duty of car #2 to put out an entirely different line of "billing" to be circus.

It is always the point of the shrewd circus owner nowadays to let his first announcements swell with great descriptive fluency upon the general magnitude of his show; car No. 2's printing now adds to the fuel of public curiosity by lingering upon the special feature of the circus. With Barnum, for instance, it would have been Jumbo two years ago; to-day it is his Burmese hairy family; with Forepaugh, those 30 performing elephants; with Frank Robbins, Charley Fish, the rider; with Doris, the Colvin Wild West attachment, and so on. This force not only puts out new printing; it also, through its agents, secures as much more billboard and window space as possible, and it replaces all paper washed off the other boards by rain.

With car No. 2, by the way, is the excursion agent, generally a bright, attractive man, somewhat posted in railroading. It is his particular duty to arrange the excursions from out of town on the day of the show. He visits the passenger agents of all the roads leading into the city, and closes with them as to the fares, which are always greatly reduced. That the circus and the railroads are mutually benefited naturally follows. This excursion business, however, is almost entirely confined to Barnum and Forepaugh shows, the other circuses not having "pull" enough in the suburbs to justify the roads in making rates with them. Of course, the moment



Impressive stand of paper by the Sells Bros. Circus for engagement at Salisbury, North Carolina on October 25, 1895. Pfenig Archives.

excursions are contracted for, the stations interested and the towns themselves are vigorously billed, the reduced rates being especially advertised, and the roads allowing the bill posters and distributors free passes to go to and from such stations.

Presumably the new railroad law is going to work a change in this pass business; and yet the average circus agent will blush for his business if the day comes when he will have to pay. Be that as it may, the work of car No. 2 ought not to take much over a day. One or two circuses allow two days for this second billing, and use another car, which goes on to the next town, and thereafter alternates with car No. 2, each taking two days to a town. In that case, the car last mentioned would be No. 3, and its work would in no way differ from that of No. 2. Then comes car No. 4—the last before the show itself, and by many managers held to be the most important, since its work must be of so novel a character that the public will retain a vivid impression of it all. This view has been skillfully utilized by Forepaugh's clever lieutenant, Louis E. Cooke, who has originated the idea of a "bugle brigade," as he calls it, which he places on this car and works for all it is worth. The men ride on horseback over the surrounding country, throwing bundles of "dodgers," "hangers," &c., to the farm hands, at corner stores, crossroads, and, in fact, wherever there is a likely chance of getting in effective advertising. Another party of the occupants of car No. 4 covers the city ground again, trimming up the windows, looking after the lithographs, replacing washed-off paper, &c.

All this describes the general run of circus advance work, as nowadays done, and as in contradistinction to the clumsy methods of the old times. There are, of course, side issues to this plan, two or three of which are worth mentioning. At least one important office is that held by the mailing clerk, who usually is attached to car No. 1. It is his duty while in town to secure the addresses and names of all the leading people in the county, such as farmers, politicians, officeholders, &c. To all those persons he sends by mail special circulars as to the show's merits and respectability. The move long ago endorsed itself as profitable, for, though it is hard to believe, most of the people who receive those advertisements feel flattered by Barnum's notice of them, or by Forepaugh's evident knowledge of their local fame. Then there is the country Postmaster. He is not forgotten. To every Postmaster in the county, from fifty to 100 miles around, is mailed a big package of printing, with a polite circular asking him to aid in its intelligent distribution. He does so. There are a couple of free tickets in the letter for his own use.

Now, that game of billiards with the night clerk comes in with the press agent, if at all, and probably the last press agent in the town, and he is the one with the show itself, does most of the standing about. On each of cars No. 2 and 3 there is a press agent. They make the contracts for the advertising in the newspapers and secure as many free notices as possible in advance of the show's coming. They are generally men who can write good English, and not a few of them are blessed with journalistic experience. To their ordinary duties they add the harassing responsibility of distributing the first relay of free tickets to the show. But the boss man of leisure is the general press agent attached to the show—he who writes up the "ads" from day to day, takes the editors down to the lot in his carriage, and drops in o' nights with his "little paragraph, you

know, just to keep her humming."

The agent gave his word of honor that the New York news and city editors and reporters were pretty good fellows to get along with, and that they were not deadheads, as a rule. There were some night editors over in Boston, he said, who made him tired; in fact, he thought Boston wore the crown as a deadhead town. Perhaps he had a prejudice. Anyhow, when this last press agent has finished his round of newspaper offices, with his persuasive manner and his neatly-turned paragraph, rich with adjectives, and when he has read the proof of his "ad" and given out a few free tickets in the counting room, then the hotel clerk is his pie; then the game of billiards is lost and won; then the weary press agent begins to feel life is worth living, and the night clerk finds it expensive at 60 per hour.

Circus agents are pretty well paid, all things considered. "Bill" Durand, who is dead, once got \$13,000 for two years' work with Barnum as general agent. "Jumbo" Davis never worked for less than \$5000, and his brother Charles A., who stutters, but writes well, is worth that much and gets it. Still, most press agents are paid less, \$3000 or \$3500 being the average. Some of them are hired by the year, and are expected to devote their whole time to the show's interests in that event; others sign only for the season, and in the winter go out on the road with dramatic or musical troupes. When with the circus all their expenses are allowed, and the press agents generally have good-sized weekly bills.

Besides the proprietor's keen eye, another's, just as sharp, watches over the collective body of advance workers with a big show. That is argus optic[?] of the general or head agent. He is almost autocratic in his sway. He should know the route by heart, and also know the men in his employ, and their capabilities. Ever on the go, sometimes ahead and sometimes with the show, difficulties of any sort are settled by him, and in case of a doubt, he is invariably applied to for a decision. His order is given for all printing, and he sees that it is shipped ahead to such points as will need it. At all hours he is in telegraphic communication with his agents, as well as his employers, and the year round he may be said to be a busy man, for in the winter he is planning, scheming, and bargaining just as hard as any energetic merchant of the city. Proprietors like Doris, Frank and Burr Robbins, the Sells Bros., S. H. Barrett, and the Orrins are their own general agents, but the boss man of the Barnum outfit is J. L. Hutchinson, and probably Louis Cooke is in more ways than one the right-hand bower of Father Adam Forepaugh. *The Sun*, New York City, March 6, 1887. BW

The Back Cover

The Clarkonians—brothers Ernest and Charles Clarke—were the first of perhaps ten truly extraordinary twentieth century flying trapeze acts. Born into a prominent English circus family, they joined Barnum and Bailey in late 1901 at Paris and continued with the company for the 1902 season in France and Switzerland. They came to America with the Barnum show's return from Europe in October 1902, appearing on the Greatest Show on Earth in 1903 and 1904. After spending 1905 at the New York Hippodrome, the Clarkes signed with Ringling Bros. Circus where they remained through the 1926 tour, a remarkably long stretch with one show. That was their peak. After that they appeared on the Hagenbeck, Barnes and Cole shows, then some small truck operas, their careers winding down on the Tom Mix Circus in the late 1930s.

In 1937 circus historian Charles G. Sturtevant wrote: "No one today will dispute that for versatility Ernie Clarke was the greatest flyer that ever mounted a pedestal in an aerial act." The Clarkonians signature trick was a seemingly impossible double somersault followed by a full pirouette by Ernie from the fly bar to Charles on the catch bar, first done in public in 1903 after four and a half years of practice, a tribute to their persistence. Ernie also did a description-defying double somersault that began as a twisting back somersault followed by a forward somersault to the catcher. They were first to catch a triple somersault from a fly bar to the catcher's hands. The Flying Jordans did an earlier triple on the flying trapeze, but it was a hand to hand, not bar to hand, catch in which

Lena Jordan, who did the triple in the act, was cast from one person to another.

Part of the appeal of flying trapeze is that its tricks can be quantified. The number of twists and turns a flyer makes are measurable, making it easier for the audience to gauge the excellence of an act. The Clarkes told Sturtevant that Ernie completed a quadruple somersault in practice, "but it was never a sure enough trick to be presented to the public." It was not successfully executed before an audience until Miguel Vazquez did it on Ringling in 1982. The Clarkonians were years ahead of their peers in the technical difficulty of their routines.

The photo on the back cover shows Charles, left, and Ernie in front of an attractive bill stand of themselves doing their famous trick for the 1908 Ringling opening in Chicago. The Clarkes had this photo made into post cards to send to friends. On the back of the example shown here is a note from Ernie Clarke to Orrin Davenport, a superb bareback equestrian on Barnum and Bailey, in which Ernie writes: "Hello Boss. Have a Cracker Jack ball team. Would like to meet you fellows." It was mailed from Bay City, Michigan on June 5, 1908 while the Ringling show appeared there. The text reflects the popularity of baseball on the country's sporting landscape.

All the big circuses fielded baseball teams that often played local nines. It also reveals the extent to which Ernie Clarke, a practitioner of the national pastime after only a few years in the United States, had been Americanized. He lived here until his death in 1941 at the age of sixty-four, and is buried in Glendale, California. Original postcard in Pfening Archives. Fred D. Pfening III

Coming Soon! Coming Sure!

The 2013 Circus Historical Society convention will be in Peru, Indiana from July 17 to 20. The agenda includes visits to the Circus City Circus, the International Circus Hall of Fame, the Miami



Wagon shed at American Circus Corporation winter quarters, 1920s, now the International Circus Hall of Fame.

County Museum, the Circus City Festival parade, and presentations on a wide variety of subjects. The always-popular auction of circus memorabilia is another feature. Go to the CHS website <circushistory.org> for details. Book early! Limited motel space.

RINGLING
BROS.
COLISEUM TWICE
DAILY
FOR A BRIEF SEASON
OPENING: NIGHT OF
THURSDAY
APR.

RINGLING BROS'

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TWISTING PIROUETTE



THE CLARKONIANS

AN ACT OF RINGLING QUALITY

NO FEAT LIKE
THIS ONE
HAS EVER BEEN ATTEMPTED
BY ANY AERIAL ARTISTS OTHER

THAN **THE CLARKONIANS**.
THE DOTTED LINES SHOW THE DOUBLE SOMERSAULT
AND TWISTING PIROUETTE PERFORMED IN MID-AIR.
THE ONLY ACT OF ITS
KIND IN THE WORLD.

